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S. BONIFACE AND THE CONVERSION OF GERMANY.

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ENGLISH.

By MRS. HOPE,
AUTHOR OF "EARLY MARTYRS," ETC.

EDITED BY THE
REV. JOHN BERNARD DALGAIRNS,
OF THE LONDON ORATORY OF S. PHILIP NERI.



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PART I.
OLD GERMANY.

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CHAPTER I.

THE GERMANS.

At some unknown period in the pre-historic age, the Aryan, or Indo-European family, broke up from its primeval home in the East, and divided into two branches, which, moving in opposite directions, formed themselves respectively into the Eastern and Western groups of nations.

The Eastern Aryans first took possession of Persia, and then, invading India through Sind, gradually made themselves masters of the country as far as the Ganges. As they advanced, they drove before them the older Dravidian population, a race resembling the Australian savages in physical conformation, and now represented by the natives of the Deccan and the hill tribes of the Indian peninsula¹.

In this fertile region the Indian Aryans easily supplied themselves with the necessaries of life, and were thus enabled to advance early to a high state of civilization. From their first appearance in history they

¹ Huxley. Quarterly Journal of the Ethnological Society, October, 1869.

are found formed into powerful states, possessing disciplined armies, and cultivating learning and the arts, commerce and manufactures. Also, such vestiges of past ages as may now be gleaned from the writings of their poets and philosophers, their great national works, and their fine archæological remains, all point to a distant period of higher culture and greater prosperity than the present.

A far different destiny was that of the Western Aryans. Turning their steps northward and westward, they broke at an early period into five families—the Greeks, the Romans, the Celts, the Germans, and the Slaves. At the opening of history, the Greeks and Romans alone were in a state of civilization, chiefly derived from India and Egypt, and confined within the narrow limits of Greece and the south of Italy; while the Celts, Germans, and Slaves had fallen into barbarism. The Celts occupied Gaul, Spain, and the British Isles. The Germans were spread over the north and centre of Europe from Scandinavia to the Vistula, and eastwards along the course of the Danube to the Palus Mæotis and the Caspian Sea; and the Slaves were scattered over vaguely defined regions to the north-east, stretching on to the boundless plains of Central Asia.

The lot of the Germans, who are the subject of the following pages, was a striking contrast to that of their eastern brethren. Engrossed with the difficulties of subsistence, they soon lost all knowledge of antediluvian arts and sciences beyond what was indispens-

able for the supply of their daily wants, and rapidly sank into a nomadic state. The memory of their origin died out; and they were wont to call themselves "Thiuda," or earth-born, and their language "Thiudisca", from Tiv, Tuisco, or Tyr, the earth-born son of Woden, and God of War, from whose son, Mannus, the central tribes claimed to be descended². The tradition of their emigration from the east was, however, preserved by the Franks, Saxons, Bavarians, and Swabians⁴; and in one of the Eddas⁵ it is told, how Odin led the Goths to Scandinavia from Asaland or Asaheim, the land or home of the Ases, a region to the east of the Don, in which stood the city Asgard, the palace of elect souls. Their only occupations were war, hunting, and agriculture; and their sole arts, the forging of rude weapons and agricultural implements, the construction of huts of wood or rough stone, the manufacture of linen or woollen cloth, and the tanning of skins for their garments.

But notwithstanding the simplicity of their life, the Germans cannot be strictly said to have fallen back into primitive barbarism. For they were formed into organized societies; they possessed laws, ancient religious traditions, and well-formed languages; their domestic rela-

² Freytag, *Bilder aus der Deutschen Vergangenheit*. Erster bund. Aus dem Mittelalter, c. i. p. 35.

³ Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 2nd edit. c. ix. p. 176, and c. xv. p. 318.

⁴ Ozanam, *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, c. i. p. 21.

⁵ *Yuglinga Saga*, *Herins Kringla*, by Snorro Sturleson; ap. Ozanam, *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, p. 407.

tions were remarkable for tenderness and purity; and they were deeply imbued with the finer sentiments of human nature, such as justice, truth, honor, fidelity, devotion, and the appreciation of mutual rights.

The Germans formed several groups of nations⁶, each of which was divided into tribes, which were subdivided again and again almost infinitely, down to the village community, or even to the family, which, in some Low German nations, was the nucleus of society. There were also class divisions, based on supposed descent from Woden by different women. The laws of the Allemans, Frisians, Burgundians, and Saxons, recognize four classes, namely, nobles, freemen, serfs, and slaves; but those of the Franks, the English, and the Scandinavians, admit only three classes, no legal rights being allowed to slaves. The kings, chiefs, priests, and magistrates were chosen from the noble class; and as they alone were initiated into Runic lore, they discussed all important matters before they submitted them to the decision of the national assemblies. The freemen, who formed the body of the nation, were all trained as soldiers, while the serfs were restricted to agriculture.

But though great varieties of social organization existed in different tribes, the fundamental principle of society in all was the equal and common possession of the land and of every social right by every free man. The land belonged to the village or family, and not to

⁶ This account of the social organization of the Germans is taken chiefly from Freytag's "*Bilder*," with some additions from Ozanam's "*Les Germains avant le Christianisme*."

individuals. The only private property that a man could hold, was the flocks and herds which he had reared, and the house with its adjoining garden, which he had created by his labor. The land immediately round the village was divided by lot, and an equal share was assigned to each free man, to be cultivated for the maintenance of his family, not according to his own will, but in strict obedience to the traditional customs of his tribe, by which the succession of crops, modes of tillage, and times of sowing and reaping, were regulated. But at the season when no crops were in the ground, these lots were thrown open to all for the feeding of their herds. Beyond the arable land there lay in a wide circle, the forest, the pasture-grounds, the ponds, and the rivers, and these were for general use, subject only to the restrictions required for the protection of the common rights.

But while the German's individual action was thus restricted by the rights of his fellows, he had ample scope for his love of freedom in the proud consciousness that he had no superior, and that he enjoyed equal rights with all around him. In common with them he tilled his land, pastured his flocks, and watched jealously that no one encroached on his plot of ground, or infringed the laws of cultivation, or increased his flocks and herds beyond what the land would bear. In common with them he chose a chief, assisted at the national assemblies, followed the armed host into the field, and drew by lot his equal share of the spoil. Were he accused of any breach of the traditionary laws of his

tribe, he must be tried by his peers; and even if found guilty, no man dare bind or strike him, save only the priest, who represented the gods.

Even the chief whom he elected, was not his superior, for he held only the same lot of land, and received only the same share of spoil as the rest; and he could claim neither gifts nor obedience, unless they were voluntarily offered. When Clovis at Soissons asked his soldiers to let him reserve a beautiful vase for the use of the Church, a wild Frank struck it with his axe, and shivering it to pieces, exclaimed, "Thou shalt have nought but what falls to thee by lot." So jealous were these barbarians on this point of equality, that they would not even allow their chiefs to lead them to combat on horseback. Thus, before the battle fought at Strasburg between the Romans and the Allemanni, A.D. 357, the latter made a great outcry at seeing their chiefs on horseback, and insisted on their dismounting and sharing the fortune of the field on foot⁷. The earliest record of a German's words, expresses this pride of freedom and equality. A Roman happening, about B.C. 109, to meet in Old Mecklenburg a herdsman clad in skins, asked him at what rate his master paid him for his work; whereupon the barbarian answered proudly, "May I never be given such a man, even if he be in existence⁸."

From time to time the natural increase of population, or a succession of bad harvests, or the mere love

⁷ Ammian. Marcellin. xvi. 12, 39; ap. Freytag, Bilder, c. i. p. 98.

⁸ Freytag, Bilder, c. i. p. 28.

of wandering, would cause a colony to be sent forth. The emigrants would volunteer, or be chosen by lot. On the day indicated by divination, the party would assemble. The usual religious rites would be performed. The women, children, and images of the gods would be placed on wagons, and the men would prepare to follow on foot, driving their flocks and herds before them. At the appointed hour they would start into the vast forest, directing their course, as they believed, under the guidance of the gods, by the flight of eagles or swans, or the tracks of wolves, bears, or deer. Thus they would roam on for long periods of time and to great distances, avoiding the territories of strong neighbors, accepting hospitality from friendly tribes, or forcing it from weak ones; their numbers often swollen by volunteers from the villages near which they passed, or diminished by the combats through which they had to cut their way; sometimes settling down for a few months, and then moving on in search of a better site before they would fix themselves permanently. Thus they had worked their way in the course of long centuries, from the far East to Scandinavia; and thus, in vast hordes of tens of thousands of warriors, accompanied by women, children, and cattle, they poured down on the Roman Empire.

In the north the course of emigration naturally led to the sea. The emigrants found a home in their ships, and, intoxicated with the passion for adventure and the thirst for blood and booty, they issued by thousands from all the bays, promontories, and islands of the

northern seas, fearless of storms and danger, and carrying terror and desolation whithersoever they appeared. Tradition tells that Half, a Norwegian prince, cruised on the ocean for eighteen years with a band of sixty chosen men, who had vowed never to bind up their wounds, nor to take refuge in a harbor from the storm. On one occasion their ship, overladen with booty, being about to sink, the lot was cast to choose those who should throw themselves overboard to save the chief and the cargo; when the selected victims leaped cheerfully into the waves, and swimming after the vessel, reached the shore safely, and claimed their share of the spoil.

But notwithstanding these emigrations, whether by land or by sea, the colonists retained their claims on the territory from which they had gone forth. Nor was this a mere nominal right. When the Vandals, under Genseric, had settled in Africa, their kindred in Silesia petitioned them to give up their share in the lands of their tribe in their old home; but they refused to do so, on the plea that they knew not what fortune yet awaited them⁹. A more striking instance is that of the Heruli, who in the third century broke up from their settlement at the mouth of the Oder, one half of them joining their kindred, the Goths, in Scandinavia, and the rest moving southward. The latter obtained from the Romans, A.D. 491, a settlement in Illyria; but their royal tribe, preferring to rejoin their kinsmen in the north, turned away from the allurements of luxury and

⁹ Freytag, *Bilder*, c. i. p. 66.

wealth, and boldly faced the dangers and privations of the wilderness. This act was considered so pious and honorable, that all the nations through whom they journeyed, offered them hospitality, so that they crossed Europe without striking a single blow; and on their arrival in Scandinavia, the Goths, after a separation of above two centuries, received them cordially, and gave them a portion of their land¹.

A system so favorable to the development of individual energy, was necessarily defective in the unity required for vigorous action. This defect was remedied in most of the principal nations, by the election of a king from one of the families descended from the gods, who commanded veneration and obedience as their representative. But the office was not hereditary, nor indeed did it necessarily last for life; as in case of want of success in arms, or any other cause of disgust, the king was deposed by the national assembly of warriors².

Another mode of obtaining united action was a voluntary act of devotion, by which one or more men bound themselves by vow to the service of a chief for life, or

¹ Freytag, *Bilder*, c. i. p. 64.

² The Burgundians dethroned their king if his arms were unsuccessful, or if there was a succession of bad harvests. Ozanam, *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, c. iii. p. 115. The Franks deposed Childeric, father of Clovis, for his debaucheries, and unanimously elected as his successor Egidius, a Roman, who reigned alone for eight years. Then hearing that Childeric was reformed, they recalled him, and required Egidius to share the throne with him. In the seventh and eighth centuries the Franks frequently deposed the reigning Merovingian, and at last they transferred the crown to Pepin-le-Bref. Gregor. Turon. ii. 12; Rohrbacher, *Histoire de l'Eglise Catholique*, vol. xi. l. 52, p. 42.

for a fixed period, or sometimes only for the execution of some enterprise. The vow was solemnly ratified by an oath and certain religious ceremonies; a ring or badge was worn in token of it; and the duties which it imposed, took precedence of all other claims and ties. Henceforth the vowed follower had no independent property, will, or existence; he lived only for his chief, sharing his good or bad fortune, shielding him in battle at the risk of his own life, following him into captivity, and scorning to survive him. This principle of personal devotion was deeply rooted in the German. It called out his best points even as a Pagan, and when he became a Christian, it was the great instrument by which the Church wrought the regeneration of Europe.

The position accorded to woman is often taken as a criterion of a nation's progress in civilization. In this respect the Germans may be ranked above all Pagans, and second only to Christians. Though woman was always under the protection and authority of men,—as a girl, of her father, as a wife, of her husband, and as a widow, of her son,—yet she was granted an ample measure of tenderness and respect. While the man was honored for his deeds of strength, the woman was looked up to with reverence, or even awe, as the seat of wisdom³. The laws of the Swedes, Saxons, Franks, Allemans, Bavarians, and Lombards, imposed a heavier penalty for wrongs done to a woman, "because," as was said in the Bavarian code, "she is unable to protect

³ Grimm, c. xvi. p. 369, and c. v. p. 84.

herself by arms⁴." The old national poetry tells of the pure and tender tie which subsisted between the maiden and her lover, surviving even death. Marriage was an act of mutual devotion, consecrated by religious rites. The German wife was not, like her eastern sister, the mere slave of her husband's will and pleasure, nor, like the Roman matron, only the mistress of his house and the nurse of his children; but she was his tenderly cherished companion, confidante, and adviser. Her wedding gifts were a yoke of oxen, a horse, and a spear, to show that she was to help her husband in his field labors, to follow him to war, to mediate between contending hosts, to excite his courage in the hour of battle, to bind his wounds, to bury him, and, if needs be, to avenge him. In some tribes a second marriage was forbidden, and in others the widow threw herself into her husband's grave, or immolated herself upon his funeral pyre⁵.

Moreover, the German woman was the link between heaven and earth. She was supposed to enjoy the peculiar favor of the gods. The secrets of the Runes were confided to her; the future was revealed to her; words of divine wisdom flowed from her lips; and the boldest men would quail before her mysterious power. And even in the invisible world woman held an im-

⁴ Ozanam, *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, c. iii. p. 101.

⁵ Among the Heruli the woman who had not the courage to die with her husband, was doomed to a life of ignominy. The Icelanders believed that if a wife followed her husband in death, he would pass over the threshold of hell without its heavy gate falling on his heels. Ozanam, *Les Germains avant le Christianisme*, c. iii. p. 100.

portant place. For the goddess Freyja and the virgin battle-spirits (*Schlachtjungfrauen*) attended Odin to the battle-field, and hovered over the fight, muttering Runes to turn the balance of victory, carrying off the souls of the slain, and presenting them the brimming ale-cup in the Valhalla of eternal bliss.

But though such honor was given to woman, especially in her conjugal relation, and death was the penalty for all breaches of chastity and the marriage vow⁶, yet truth requires it to be confessed, that the same restraints were not imposed on men as on women, and that in many tribes polygamy was the privilege of their chiefs and nobles⁷. Among Pagans addicted to war and pillage, and with whom the increase of population was an incident of personal and national prosperity, it could scarcely be otherwise. But notwithstanding, the honor accorded to the marriage consecrated by solemn religious vows, was a constant protest against licentiousness; and no doubt the sentiment of purity to which it appealed, told on the national morals. For though the Germans fell far short of the Christian standard, yet it is universally allowed that their lives were much more pure than those of other Pagan nations.

The great problem of government, how to unite personal independence with submission to authority, never appeared more difficult of solution than with the

⁶ S. Bonifac. Ep. 72. Wurdwein—19 Serarius. Ad Ethebaldum Regem Mercionum.

⁷ "Ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur." Tacit. De Mor. Germ. c. 18.

Germans. One sees a fierce, proud, self-willed race, wandering for long ages through boundless space, free as the air they breathed, wild as the beasts among whom they dwelt, reveling in the excitement of war and pillage, their very mien and bearing, their flowing locks, and bodies naked in battle, proclaiming their intolerance of restraint. Yet this uncontrollable race is found to submit with strange inconsistency to the daily, petty trammels of communistic life, and to respect, in a remarkable degree, the rights of their fellows and the traditionary laws of their tribe. Two of their characteristics explain this curious anomaly. One was their warm affections, which gave greater strength to the natural ties of nationality and kindred, and led also to the personal devotion already described. They were incapable of compulsory obedience, but they could devote themselves to the object of their love. The other was their susceptibility to religious impressions, and the strong hold which their religion was calculated to have on their daily life.

The records of German Paganism are so scanty and imperfect, that it is not now possible to give a complete description of it⁸. Satisfactory proof has, however, been collected from the fragments of old poetry, the canons of councils, the names of places, and popular customs and traditions, that the whole German race formerly

⁸ This account of the German polytheism is taken from Grimm's "Deutsche Mythologie," W. Müller's "Geschichte und System der Alt-deutschen Religion," and Ozanam's "Les Germains avant le Christianisme."

professed a religion of very ancient origin, common to all in its leading principles, but differing in the various tribes as to the names of the deities and other minor details. In this religion are to be found traces of primitive tradition, as preserved in the Mosaic writings, and also such striking points of resemblance to the polytheisms of the East and of classical antiquity, as prove a common origin.

The doctrines of One Supreme God, the Divine providence and government, the future judgment, expiatory sacrifice, and the expectation of a Redeemer and Mediator, though they were greatly obscured by idolatry and superstition, can all be traced with more or less distinctness. The name of the Supreme God was ineffable and unmentionable⁹; but it was probably he who was adored under the mysterious designation "Har Jafn Har, and Thriddi¹." He it was who sent into chaos the heat which gave motion and life to the icy mass². He was the mighty one, who will come in the great judgment, strong and above all; who governs the universe, and whose decrees endure for ever³.

But it was not to this One Supreme God that the popular worship was offered. Its objects were beings to whom no idea of infinity was attached. Their existence

⁹ Sæm. 38. Grimm, c. xxv. p. 785.

¹ Ozanam, c. ii. p. 30. W. Müller, however, applies it to Odin and his brothers. Geschichte, l. ii. c. 2, p. 201.

² Grimm, c. xxv. p. 784. W. Müller, l. ii. c. i. p. 164. Hence the saying of a later date, "Durch die Kraft dessen, der die Hitze sandte."

³ Edda Sæmundar, t. iii. Voluspa str. 58. This verse has been said to be a Christian interpolation, but Geijer has satisfactorily proved the contrary. See Ozanam, c. ii. p. 31.

had had a beginning, and it would have an end. They had human forms, human habits, and human infirmities. They occupied only a limited space, and moved from place to place. They needed food and rest, and ate, drank, and slept. They had wives and children, and experienced pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, sickness and health, and every human infirmity and vicissitude.

The popular religion was a worship of nature, closely allied to the great corruption of primitive truth, which is supposed to have been invented by the Chamitic race, and communicated by them to all the ancient world⁴. Its fundamental idea was the deification of the two great principles of nature, the active and passive, or the masculine and feminine, as they are often called; sometimes acting in union, and at others clashing together and opposing each other. From these two principles emanated interminable generations of gods and goddesses, demigods, giants, dwarfs, elves, fairies, and spirits of infinite variety, who represented all the objects and sensible operations of nature, the pantheistic chain terminating with the creation of man and the visible world. Not only fragments of revealed truth, but also the first principles of physical science, may be traced in this worship of nature, overlaid and distorted by fables and superstitions, which would almost unavoidably spring from a corrupt religion, held by a race of highly imaginative and contemplative temperament.

According to the German cosmogony, there existed

⁴ Rosmini, *Il Divino nella Natura*, sezione iii. c. 12, § 146, 149.

before the creation of the gods, a void abyss, on the north of which was the world of cold and darkness (Niflheimr or Nebelheim), and on the south, the world of light and heat (Muspilli). Out of the world of darkness issued twelve poisonous rivers, which fell into the abyss and froze, thus forming a mass of ice. But from the world of heat came a warm wind, which thawed the ice and gave it life; so that from the dripping mass sprang forth the wicked giant Ymir, the progenitor of the race of giants, who were the representatives of the primary cosmic forces of nature⁵.

From the drops of the thawing ice sprang also a cow, who, after licking the ice, gave birth to the giant Bure, whose son Börr was the father of Odin, Vili, and Ve. With the three last began the first and beneficent race of the Ases, whose special office it was to fight with the giants, to counteract their evil influences, and to create and maintain the existing order of the world⁶.

Odin, Vili, and Ve began their work by killing the giant Ymir. Out of his body such streams of blood flowed, that there was a deluge, and all the giants were drowned, except Bergelmir, who with his wife, escaped in a boat, and renewed the race of giants. Odin and his brothers then created the earth out of Ymir's flesh, the mountains out of his bones, the sea of his blood, the sky of his skull, the clouds of his brains, the rocks

⁵ Sæmund, 3; Voluspa, 3. Ozanam, c. t. p. 31. Grimm, xix. 525. Müller, l. ii. c. 4, p. 315—326.

⁶ Sæm. 35^b. Sn. 8. Grimm, c. xix. p. 526. Ozanam, c. 2, p. 31.

of his teeth, and the trees of his hair⁷. But out of the bodies of the giants who were drowned, there crawled worms, which the Ases made into dwarfs, with human forms and endowed with reason. These dwarfs took up their abode in the earth and the stones, and set to work to transform the earth, which was stiff and motionless, till by their latent, noiseless operations they made it fit for human habitation⁸.

It came to pass that one day Odin and his brothers found on the sea-shore two trees, out of which they made Askr and Embla, the first man and woman, who were powerless and inactive, till Odin gave them soul and spirit, while one of his brothers endowed them with reason and feeling, and the other bestowed on them the gifts of beauty, speech, sight, and hearing. The central region of the universe, called *Mittilgard*, was assigned them for their abode. And in the centre of the earth was *Asgard*, the city of the gods, in which were the throne of Odin and twelve seats for the Ases⁹.

Highest in the hierarchy of gods was Woden, or Odin, as he was called in Scandinavia, the omnipresent, almighty creator, the father of gods and men; who ruled the universe, riding on the clouds, and sending

⁷ *Sæm*. 33^b, 35^b, 45^b; *Sn.* 8, 9. *W. Müller*, l. ii. c. 1, p. 165. *Grimm*, c. xix. p. 526. *Ozanam*, c. 2, p. 32.

⁸ *Sæm*. 2; *Sn.* 15. *Grimm*, c. xix. p. 527. *Müller*, l. ii. c. 1, p. 169. *Ozanam*, c. ii. p. 33.

⁹ *Sæm*. 3^b; *Sn.* 10. *Grimm*, c. xix. p. 527. *Müller*, l. ii. c. 1, p. 169. *Ozanam*, c. ii. p. 33. In *Sæm*. 3^b the brothers of Odin are called *Hœnir* and *Lodhr* (or *Loki*); and in *Sn.* 10, *Vili* and *Ve*. But these are supposed to be different names for the same gods. See *Müller*, as above, and *A. Schrader*, *Germ. Mythol.* iii. f.

rain and sunshine ; in whom were centred all godlike attributes, of which he imparted a share to the other gods ; and from whom proceeded all beauty, wisdom, strength, and fruitfulness, the knowledge of agriculture and the arts, the inspirations of music and song, and all good gifts. He was the giant hunter, who in the darkest nights rushed through the air on his white charger, clad in a brown mantle, his white locks streaming from beneath his slouching hat, followed by a train of wild huntsmen, the horses snorting fire, the bloodhounds baying, announcing war and carnage, danger and distress, as he passed along with lightning speed. But he was in a more special way the god of war, reveling in blood and slaughter, giving courage and victory to his votaries, and admitting to his Valhalla, or hall of bliss, none but those who died by the sword.

Next to him was his son Thor, who rode on the thunder-cloud and whirlwind, whose hammer was the thunderbolt, whose arrows were the lightning flashes, and whose wagon dashed through the heavens with crashing noise and ungovernable fury.

The third place was given in Germany to Saxnôt, the stone-born son of Woden. His name appears with those of Woden and Thor, in the well-known abjuration of Paganism required of Christian converts ; but he was also worshipped as Eor, Are, Ere, or Cheru, and Tyr, Zio, Tuisco, or Tius, from which last the name of the third day of the week, and the national designation "thiuda," were derived. The deity known by these

various names was the god of war, who rode to battle on the clouds at Woden's side, resplendent with light and glory, hewing down hosts with his sword of stone or iron, and spreading death on every side. But in Scandinavia, the third place in the trilogy with Odin and Thor, was given to Freyr, known also as Fro or Fricco, the god of love and marriage, of joy and pleasure, and the dispenser of rain and sunshine, of famine and plenty, of barrenness and fruitfulness.

After these supreme gods may be placed the great Goddess Mother of earth, universally worshipped, though under various names, as Nerthus, Hertha, Bertha, Erche, Holda, Ostara, Cisa, Frigg, Frea', &c. The variety of her names and worship in different places, has given rise to much dispute as to the identity of the goddess. She seems to have been worshipped under the double character of the house-mother, the patroness of spinning, and all domestic duties, and of the mother, or source of all fruitfulness. Sometimes she is compared to Juno or Diana, at others to Ceres or Cybele, and at others to the mother of the redeemer, whose worship may be traced in the myths of Mithra, Io, and Isis, thus connecting the far East with the distant West¹.

Besides the foregoing, there was Balder, the bravest, most beautiful and brilliant, the wisest, gentlest,

¹ Grimm, c. xiii., where the various names of the goddess and the varieties in her worship are fully discussed. Müller is disposed to think that Nerthus, mentioned by Tacitus, was a Celtic and not a German deity. *Geschichte*, l. i. c. 2. p. 47.

² Nicolas, *Études sur le Christianisme*, vol. i. l. 2, c. 4, p. 5.

most eloquent, and best beloved of the Ases³. There was also the voluptuous Freyja, Freyr's sister, the Venus of the North; and Loki, the god of fire, and his daughter Hel, or death; and Ægir, god of the sea, with his cruel wife, Rân, whose nine daughters were the currents and waves; and Surtr, the swarthy giant who ruled in Muspilli, the southern world of fire and heat. And besides all these there were countless hosts of deities and spirits of infinite variety, who gave life and soul to every mountain, plain, wood, and stream, every spot on the face of the earth, in the wide ocean, and in the high vault of heaven, nay even to the very trees and plants, rocks and stones.

Endless existence would seem naturally to be a necessary attribute of godhead. But the Germans did not deem it so. On the contrary, they believed that the race of Odin and his creation was doomed to destruction. In the awful last day, Loki, the god of fire, will be unchained; his son Fenrir, the hell-wolf, with all the evil spirits in wolfish form, will break loose, and muster in the train of Hel (death). One wolf will devour the sun, and another the moon. The stars will fall from heaven. Iormundgandr, the great sea-serpent, will rush out of the ocean. The world of fire will vomit forth the race of giants, who, with flames in their hands, and the swarthy Surtr at their head, will march in battle array against Odin and his host. A deadly struggle will ensue; the Ases will be defeated and killed; all men will die; and the world

³ Sn. 21, 26, 27, compared with Sæm. 41^b. Müller, l. ii. c. 2, p. 251.

wrapped in flames, will sink into the sea. Then will come the Night of the gods. But this night will be followed by a bright and happy morrow. A new and more beautiful earth will rise from out of the sea; new Ases will be created; Balder and the souls of all good men will enter into this abode of bliss, while the wicked will be punished in hell; and thus a new cycle will be inaugurated⁴.

It is a disputed question whether the Germans had temples and images, or whether their worship was conducted only in the open air and through symbols. There exists evidence, however, that both kinds of worship were common. It is undoubted that the gods were worshipped in sacred groves, at fountains, hills, and trees, and that worship was offered to the sword of Tyr or Saxnôt, and to obscene symbols. There was also in Saxony the celebrated Irminsul, or column of the universe, which Charlemagne destroyed, and which was a block of wood of great size, in the centre of a grove⁵. And there was the trunk of a tree "covered with diverse images," which S. Walaric found in Neustria⁶. There is also constant mention of both temples and images, in writings from the fourth century up to the lists of pagan rites forbidden by councils of the Church. In the low state of German art, it is probable that the images were often little more than rude

⁴ Grimm, c. xiv. p. 288; c. xxv. p. 774—784. Müller, l. ii. c. 7 p. 386.

⁵ Translatio S. Alexandri: Auctor. Ruodolfo. Pertz Monumenta Germaniæ Historica, ii. p. 676.

⁶ Vit. S. Walaric. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 78.

blocks of wood. But when definite distinctive forms, even to the color of their hair and their dress, were ascribed to the gods, it is reasonable to suppose that attempts, limited only by the artists' want of skill, would be made to give a material expression to these ideal forms⁷.

It is easy to conceive how strong must have been the influence of such a religion on a race of great religious susceptibility, happily isolated from the contaminations of Pagan civilization, and left free to develop their sensitive and vigorous moral character in wild solitudes. In the grandest and the loveliest forms of nature which surrounded them, they ever beheld that spirit-world, in the midst of which they lived and moved. The drifting clouds were Odin's messengers of fertility. The pealing thunder was the angry voice of Thor, and the flashing lightning his fiery glance, commanding the cessation of the act then in progress. The corn, the fruit-trees, and all other blessings, were the gifts of the gods, and under their protection. Each critical event of life, birth, marriage, death, the election of a chief, the marshaling of the host for war, the sending forth of a colony, household works, and agricultural labors, each and all had their special spiritual patrons. Each village and tribe, each tree and fountain, each forest, river, and rock, had its tutelary spirit.

When at dead of night the storm gusts swept

⁷ For a full discussion of this subject, see Grimm, c. vi. p. 88. W. Müller, *Geschichte*, l. i. c. 2, p. 56.

through the forest, and the crash of falling timber marked its course, the brave woodsman, who feared nought earthly, hastened his homeward steps, or crouched in awe within his hut, lest he should behold the dread hunter and his ghostly train. When the soft wind moaned sadly through the branches, the bereaved mother dried her eyes, lest her falling tears should weigh down the pitcher, which hung on the arm of her lost little one, as it glided through the woodland in Holda's train⁸. The great mid-winter festival was the most joyous season of the year, for then the visit of the good mother-goddess was anxiously looked for. Then there would be great care and haste to finish the spinning, to clean the house, to tend the cattle in their stalls, to put the garden in order, and to correct the children's faults, lest when she came on her round of inspection, she should find cause to reprove, instead of blessing the household. The men, too, would beat and shake the fruit-trees, saying, "Sleep not, little tree, for the good mother is coming;" for should she find them sunk in their winter sleep they would miss her blessing, and bear no fruit the following season⁹.

⁸ A beautiful legend tells that a woman of Wilhelmsdorf having lost her only son, used to go every night and weep at his grave. One night as she wept, she saw the goddess Holda sweep past, followed by a train of children spirits, the last of whom was a very young child, on whose arm hung a pitcher full of water, the dripping of which wet its little shirt. Quickly she recognized her own lost darling, and as she pressed him to her bosom, he said, "How nice and warm are mother's arms! But, dear mother, do not cry so much; for you see that my pitcher is full and heavy, and my shirt is wet through."—Ozanam, c. ii. p. 57.

⁹ Freytag, Bilder, c. i. p. 92.

On the other hand, the destructive mountain torrents, the piercing north wind, the raging hurricane, pestilence, famine, drought, bodily injuries, and unfortunate accidents, all were the work of the evil spirits. The alternations of the seasons, also, were viewed as the struggle constantly going on between good and bad spirits. In the early spring the fight began with the first burst of vegetation ; and then, in all countries inhabited by the German race, a joyful festival would be celebrated in honor of the fructifying mother of the earth, Hertha, Ostara, Bertha, or by whatever other name she was known ; and her wagon or ship would be carried round the territory in solemn procession, with appropriate symbolic worship. In the summer the ripening of the corn and fruit showed that the good spirits were gaining victories ; in the autumn the plentiful harvest proclaimed their triumphs ; but with the advance of winter the decaying vegetation, the ice and snow, the floods of rain, and the howling tempests, announced their defeat by their malignant foes.

In this never-ending war between good and bad spirits, the German took his part by prayer, exorcisms, and sacrifices. Horses were preferred for the most solemn festivals ; but cattle, boars, rams, cocks, and various other animals, as well as the fruits of the earth, were offered, according to the deity whose favor or pardon was sought.

The religious idea equally governed the civil life of the German. He obeyed the laws and customs of his tribe, because they had been imposed by his divine

progenitor. He followed a chief, because the gods had directed his election. He began no work or enterprise without ascertaining the will of the gods, and securing their favor by various superstitious rites. He appealed to their judgment by ordeals or by single combat; and he called them in as witnesses to his veracity; for perjury was held in such horror by gods and men, that the most cruel punishments in hell were reserved for the perjurer, and the grass was said never to grow on his grave¹. Though he loved pillage and rapine, he did not hoard wealth for his own present use, but gave it to the gods by burying it in the ground, or burning it, or throwing it into the sea or a rapid flowing river, expecting to receive it again in a future life. And finally, from the same hope of futurity, he submitted to be punished, or even put to death by his equals; because he believed that punishment is an expiatory sacrifice, and that Odin, who loved to be invoked as "The lord of the hanged," would come by night and sit under the gibbet to converse with him².

Thus, in spite of gross ignorance and error, the German was trained to contemplate the spiritual and invisible, to aspire to something higher than the present material world, and to form habits of natural virtue, far above those of wild barbarism. He was distinguished from all other Pagan nations, even the most civilized, by his conscientiousness, his sense of honor,

¹ Ozanam, *Les Germains*, c. iii. p. 120.

² Ozanam, *Les Germains*, c. iii. p. 122.

truth, and justice, his fidelity, piety, tenderness, and, even in some degree, by his appreciation of purity.

But there was unhappily another side to the picture. The worship of the two great principles of nature, unavoidably led to the deification of violence and obscenity. In the Scandinavian trilogy, Freyr, the god of love, was associated with Odin and Thor; but in Central Germany all the three principal objects of worship, Woden, Thor, and Saxnôt, were warlike deities. War was the chief occupation and delight of all his gods. Even Freyja, the northern Venus, had a sword, and took her place on the battle-field, hovering over the blood and carnage, and bearing off with joyful triumph the souls of the slain to Odin's Valhalla. In that Elysium of bliss, the life of elect souls alternated between the joys of constantly massacring visionary foes, and drinking without satiety out of the skulls of the slain, brimming ale-cups presented by lovely Valkyrja, or battle-virgins. But this supreme felicity was reserved for those alone, who bore in death the mark of the sword. Thus, carnage and pitiless cruelty came to be ranked as the highest virtues; revenge was a duty; suicide was meritorious; and it was a pious act to kill in cold blood the wounded who lay on the field of battle.

This passion for war mingled even with the German's tenderest affections. He wooed not his maiden love with fond epithets expressive of natural or ideal beauty, but with names drawn from images of war; such as

"dear spear," "arbitress of combats," "wolf's beloved," and the like³.

Human sacrifices were the natural expression of this sanguinary temper. The tenth of the captives was the ordinary offering; but on extraordinary occasions the special favor of the gods was secured by a vow to kill all the captives, as was done after the great victory gained by the Cimbri over the Romans, when all the captives and the spoil were thrown into the Rhone. But prisoners of war were not the sole victims. Women and children were sacrificed to check an inundation; and children were buried alive to obtain a good harvest. King On sacrificed nine sons in succession to procure a long life for himself. The Swedes during a terrible famine, finding all other offerings unavailing, sacrificed their King Domaldi⁴. And what made these human sacrifices even more revolting, was, that the victim being always eaten at the sacrificial feast, cannibalism was a necessary consequence of the horrible rite.

Nor was this all; for cruelty and sensuality always go together⁵. The processions in honor of many of the deities, as, for instance, Freyr, Freyja, and the Goddess Mother, were polluted by the shameful licentiousness which characterized similar processions in Rome and Egypt in honour of Cybele and Isis. Drunkenness and gluttony were general vices. Every event of life,

³ Freytag, *Bilder*, c. i. p. 89.

⁴ *Yugl. Saga*, c. c. 18. 29. Grimm, c. ii. p. 40.

⁵ Rosmini, *Il Divino nella Natura*, sez. iii. c. 12, § 147.

whether it were birth, marriage, or death, or a religious ceremony, or the arrival of a guest, or the eve of a battle, or the celebration of a victory, all were pretences for feasting. The guests vied with each other in deep potations of ale; while the bard, who was never absent on these occasions, and whose gift of song was deemed a divine inspiration, celebrated in spirit-stirring strains the noble deeds of their gods and ancestors. The atrocities which were the favorite subjects of their verse, could not be credited on any lower authority than the existing fragments of these poems. As, for instance, how Wieland (or Volundr) having been taken prisoner and cruelly lamed by Nidhadr and his queen, killed their two sons, and then setting their skulls in silver as drinking-cups, the pupils of their eyes with precious stones, and their teeth in a necklace, he sent these loathsome gifts to their father, mother, and sister, mocking at their grief with fiendish laughter and gloating at the fulness of his revenge⁶. Or how Gudruna, having been taken to wife by Atli (or Attila) after the death of her husband Sigurd, made him eat his own two sons before she treacherously killed him at a feast⁷. As the strong ale heated their blood, these horrible tales roused their worst passions, till they would break out into frenzy, sometimes falling on each other with blind fury, at others starting on a sanguinary foray; or, if it were the eve of a battle, encouraging the drunken delirium as a heaven-sent

⁶ Sæm. ii. Ozanam, c. v. 216.

⁷ Sæm. 133—139. Müller, l. ii. c. 3. p. 311. Ozanam, c. v. p. 245.

presage of victory, and keeping up the blood-thirst till they could rush upon the foe.

The strange contrasts in the character of the Germans, corresponded to the twofold task which was assigned them by God's providence. As Pagans, their natural virtues had not power to cope with their impetuous bursts of fierce passion. Thus they were well qualified for their terrible work of destruction, when they took possession, as conquerors, of the Roman Empire, overthrowing and trampling under foot the hideous fabric of atheism, demon-worship, tyranny, selfishness, and abominable sensuality, known by the name of ancient civilization.

But when they were themselves in turn conquered by the Divine might of Christianity, the case was reversed. For their natural virtues were now fortified, and their wild passions were curbed by supernatural graces, derived from union with the Sacred Humanity through the sacraments. Thus they became, under the Church's guidance, the great instruments for the regeneration of Europe, infusing fresh life and vigor into the dying world, and breathing into the relics of the old corrupt society a spirit of truth, justice, purity, love, and heroic self-sacrifice, which classic ages had never dreamt of, and mere human reason could never have called forth.

CHAPTER II.

THE INVASIONS.

CENTURY after century the Germans roamed through the northern wilderness; their very existence unknown, or, at most, only suspected by their civilized brethren. The Greeks, it is true, had a tradition, that in the far distant north, where the year was divided into one six months' summer's day, and one winter's night of similar length, there dwelt a peaceful and pious nation, called Attakerns, who sowed their corn in the morning of that long day, reaped it at noon, and in the evening gathered their fruit into barns for winter use¹. They had once sent virgins of their tribe with offerings to the temple of Delos; but these messengers having been ill-treated by the nations on their route, the offerings were afterwards transmitted through the intermediate tribes, till at last they were discontinued.

Adventurous Greek traders had found their way

¹ Freytag conjectures that these may have been the Aduatuker, a tribe of the Cimbri, who remained at home to guard the common property, when the rest of the nation advanced towards Italy.—Bilder, c. i. p. 41.

across the German border, and thus the Greeks had been brought into contact with the more southern Germans. Philip and Perseus enlisted the Bastarni, a Gothic tribe, into their service; and it was only the rapid close of the Macedonian war, which prevented the first collision between Romans and Germans taking place upon the plains of Greece.

Greek mariners, too, about 400 B.C., had sailed as far as Scandinavia; and about a century later, Pytheas, a daring Greek trader of Massilia, described the Guttones, on whose shores amber was found, and the Teutones, who traded in amber, adding, that in those northern lands the corn was threshed in barns and not in the open air². But his tale was not credited. For when Scipio Æmilianus heard about these giants of the north, he was seized with an intuitive presentiment of the danger that threatened Rome, and inquired more about them; but well-informed Greeks quieted his fears by the assurance that Pytheas was an impostor, and his story a mere foolish fable.

Before many years elapsed, the phantom which had terrified Scipio, assumed an unmistakable bodily form. In the year 113 B.C. there appeared in the region now known as Carinthia, an enormous horde of strangers, estimated at 300,000 armed men, but really far more numerous, accompanied by their wives and children in covered wagons, and also by their horses, cattle, and dogs. They called themselves Cimbri and Teutones, and said that they came from

² Freytag, c. i. p. 27.

the far north, and had been above a year on the journey. They had spent the winter with a tribe, apparently the Boii, in Bohemia, with whom they had first fought, and then made friends, and had resumed their wanderings in the spring. Many of the Boii and other Celts had joined them, but their host consisted chiefly of a nationality totally unknown to the Romans.

Alarmed at this unexpected apparition, the Consul Papirius hastened to take possession of the passes of the Alps, and forbade the intruders to remain in the neighborhood, because the Celtic tribes to whom the district belonged, were allies of Rome. The strangers apologized, and prepared to retire; but the Roman general gave them a treacherous guide, who led them into an ambush, where he fell on them with his whole army. Notwithstanding, the Germans had the best of the fight, and the Romans escaped extermination only through a storm of thunder and hail, which the Germans interpreted as a sign of Thor's anger, and accordingly put an end to the slaughter.

The Germans then retired towards Gaul, where they remained for four years without violating the Roman frontier. But in the year 109 B.C. a Roman army, under the Consul Silanus, again appeared to protect the allies of Rome. The Germans petitioned earnestly for land, and promised in return to fight for Rome. Their request was unheeded, and Silanus at once fell upon them. In the battle which ensued he lost his army, his camp, and his life, and the road to Rome was left open to the barbarians. The victors, however, with

singular moderation, contented themselves with sending envoys to the Senate to ask for land; and even when their petition was refused, they still respected the Roman territory, and turned their arms against the neighbouring Celts.

Four more years elapsed, and then three large Roman armies appeared in the field. The first was led by Marcus Aurelius Scaurus, who at once crossed the frontier, boasting within hearing of the Germans that Romans were invincible. In the ensuing battle his army was defeated, and he himself being taken prisoner, he was contumeliously killed by the King of the Cimbri in the midst of the assembled warriors, in order to avert the ill omen of his arrogant boast.

Once more the victors sent envoys to Servilius Cæpio, the general of the second army, to ask for land; but their messengers were ill-treated, and hardly escaped with their lives. Roused to fury by this base, cowardly act, they made a solemn vow, that, if victory were granted them, they would send every Roman to the gods.

The next day they stormed Cæpio's camp, took it, and totally destroyed his army. A like fate befell the third Roman army under Cneius Mallius. The terrible vow was faithfully observed; for out of 120,000 legionaries and auxiliaries, only ten escaped. The horses were slaughtered, the arms were broken to pieces, and all the rich booty, gold, silver, and fine draperies, were piled in a heap, and thrown into the deep, swift-rushing Rhone. Then, for the third time,

the victors forebore to trespass on Roman soil, and turned their arms against the Celts.

Great was the consternation at Rome when the extent of the calamity was known. Each hour the terrified citizens expected to see the barbarians at the gates of the city. Senators rushed with their families and treasures on board the galleys, prepared to seek safety on some distant shore. Confusion and dismay reigned on every side. Nor was it a passing panic; for full two years elapsed before an army could be led against the dreaded foe. At last, in the year 102 B.C., Marius marched against the Germans, who had recently divided into two bands, with the intention of forcing their way into Italy. He prepared to give battle to the Teutones and Ambrones at Aqua Sextia (Aix). The day of battle was to the Germans a great festival. They unbound their long hair, and decked it in bridal fashion; they threw off their clothes in reckless defiance of danger; and then, excited by drink to bloodthirsty delirium, striking their swords against their shields, singing, shouting, screaming, leaping, running, they rushed upon their foes, bewildering them by the turmoil and daring of the onslaught, crushing them by their weight, or dazzling them by the rapidity with which, wielding their long swords and heavy battle-axes as if they were riding wands, they dealt right, left, and all around, thick as hail, sweeping blows that clove a head or lopped off a limb at a single stroke, and made fearful gaps in the close ranks of the enemy. The Romans, on the contrary, were trained to be steady and cool in

combat, to waste no strength, to calculate each blow, and to stand firm or advance in close array. Consequently, these towering naked forms, the wild, flowing hair and flashing blue eyes, the stunning noise, the frantic fury of the German attack, and their demoniac revelry in blood, never failed on their first encounter to confuse and awe the Roman legions. The battle at Aqua Sextia was fierce and obstinate. While its issue was in suspense the German women shouted and screamed, to excite the courage of their warriors, and the children drummed on the leather coverings of their wagons, to remind the gods whose images they bore, to give their aid in the hour of need. But, in spite of uproar and dashing recklessness, discipline triumphed, and all the barbarians were either killed or taken prisoners. When the fight was over, one thought alone occupied the faithful German wives and mothers. They asked protection for their honor, and leave to devote themselves to the service of the goddess Vesta. But their request being refused, they all, with one accord, first killed their children, and then themselves.

Meanwhile the Cimbri had crossed the Alps. They met and defeated a Roman army in the valley of the Adige, and then took quiet possession of lands to the north of the Po. Here they settled down peaceably, tilled and sowed their lots of ground, and in due time reaped their crops. But, after the lapse of a year, a Roman army under Marius and Catulus, arrived to disturb their tenure. With characteristic German chivalry, they bade Marius choose the time and place

for the combat. He appointed a rough plain and a certain hour the next day ; but with no less characteristic Roman faithlessness, he contrived to fall unawares on the Germans before that time, and killed or captured the entire host. Then the women, who knew that it was vain to sue for honorable terms, made a desperate defence within their encampment ; and when victory and escape alike became hopeless, they killed their children, and then tying the leathern guiding reins of their oxen round their own necks, they hanged themselves to the roofs of their wagons.

Such was the first war between Rome and the Germans. It cost Rome six armies, and the Germans half a million of men, besides women and children. But these numbers do not represent the true comparative loss to each. Rome could ill spare her legions ; for after her first great losses, she had to pause for two years before she could send out the army under Marius. But the loss of half a million of men was as nothing to the Germans ; for behind the invading bands there lay a countless host of giants, millions upon millions, stretching into infinite space to the north and east, while the increase of population in the forests was so rapid, that it seemed as if, hydra-like, two heads sprang up for each one that was cut off ³.

³ When Cæsar met on the north of Gaul the descendants of 6000 Aduatukers, who had not gone into Italy with the rest of the Cimbri, he was surprised to find that they had increased so marvellously within the lapse of a single generation, that after they had suffered great losses in battle, and 59,000 of them had been taken prisoners and sold as slaves, the strength of the tribe was still unbroken.

This first German war may be considered as an epitome of the relations of the two nations for nearly 500 years. From B.C. 113 to A.D. 376, the Germans steadily advanced with wives, children, and herds, ever pressing closer and closer on the Roman Empire; asking for land in return for military service; peaceful and truthful; willing to be friends if they were kindly and loyally dealt with, but quickly turned by insult or treachery into deadly foes; and in any case resolved to take the land by force of arms, if they could not get it otherwise. During all that time, and for many a century after, the panic which that first German war created at Rome, never quite died out. In spite of victory after victory, of rivers of German blood poured out on battle-fields, of crowds of barbarians led in triumph and sold as slaves, in spite even of the proud, boasting surname of Germanicus bestowed on favorite heroes, still the Roman felt that the phantom which had startled Scipio, was at his gates. It ever pressed on him like a nightmare; and in his inmost soul there abode a secret, sad consciousness that these giants of the north were destined to be his conquerors. And well might such be his feelings, for vain were all his efforts and precautions to check the advancing flood of barbarian invasion. The best troops and generals were stationed on the German frontier; roads were cut, and fortifications were erected in the forest; dissensions were skilfully fomented among the various nations and tribes; they were enlisted into the Roman armies and set to stop the passage of their fellow-countrymen; they were

conciliated by an annual tribute under pretence of securing their military alliance. But all was in vain. For periodically, on the natural increase of population, or the pressure of tribes in their rear, or if their passions were roused by some insult, treachery, or interruption in the usual gifts, they would break their bounds, and pour down upon the Empire. Then, Roman legions would be cut to pieces, towns and rich provinces would be a prey to fire, sword, and pillage, and it would only be after desperate efforts, that peace and security would be temporarily restored. Too often, however, it happened that the invaders would be driven from one part of the Empire, only to appear on an opposite quarter.

During this period the conquest of Germany was the great object of Roman ambition, and all the most distinguished generals and emperors won laurels on the German frontier. By dint of persevering efforts the limits of the Empire were advanced, so as to include three-fourths of the Germany of the middle ages. The Roman frontier extended permanently from the mouth of the Rhine to its confluence with the Moselle, then turning eastward up the Main, and south-east to the Danube near Ratisbon, it followed the course of this last river to the foot of the Carpathian mountains. But the remains of a fortified wall, sixty feet high, recently found in Saxony, Lusatia, and Silesia, prove that at some period, probably after the conquest of Drusus and Tiberius, A.D. 7, the Empire must have temporarily extended to a fortification which connected

the Elbe and the Oder. The conquered German territory formed eight provinces; namely, the two Noricums, and the first and second Rhætia, to the south-east; and Sequania, the first Belgium, and the two Germanies, to the north-east. Though the Rhætians were originally a Pelasgic race, and the Sequani and Belgians were Celts, yet the influx of Germans soon far outnumbered and dispossessed these earlier owners of the soil.

Within these conquered German provinces the Romans verified the old Latin maxim, "*Romanus sedendo vincit.*" They planted military colonies to till waste lands and clear away forests, both of which were the strongholds of barbarism. They covered the country with a net-work of magnificent roads, the chief of which joined the Black Sea to the Northern Ocean, while all were connected with, and measured from the great milestone in the Capitol. Two canals joined the Rhine to the Yssel and the Meuse, and a third was begun, though never finished, which would have united it to the Saône and the Rhone, and thus opened a communication between the North Sea and the Mediterranean. The inundations of the river Neckar were checked by a dyke. The navigation of the Lake of Constance, the Danube, and its tributaries, was improved. Castles and lines of fortifications were judiciously erected; and gradually the military stations grew into cities adorned with palaces, temples, and theatres. The names of a hundred and sixteen of these cities are known, and sixty-five at least are still in

existence. In these cities all the details of Roman government were fully carried out; justice was administered according to Roman law with all the Roman formalities; and schools were established, some of which, as for instance that of Treves, attained to great celebrity. Thus Rome was taking a strong, deep hold on the German soil and the German mind.

Meanwhile the Germans were imperceptibly entering into peaceable possession of the Empire. The majesty of Rome had inspired them with a superstitious reverence, and they were irresistibly drawn towards her. When Tiberius was encamped on the Elbe, the opposite bank being occupied by a German host, an old chief crossed the river in his bark canoe, and asked to see him whom they called Cæsar. After contemplating Tiberius for some time in silence, he departed, declaring that this was the most glorious day of his life, for hitherto he had heard of gods, but now he had seen them. The pomp of military and religious honors which surrounded the emperors, the wealth and beauty, the luxurious feasts, and even the gladiatorial combats, were the realization of their own expected Valhalla; and the abode of these divine heroes could be nought else than the long-sought city Asgard. By tens and hundreds of thousands they entered the Empire, either in its military service or as captives of war. Their courage and fidelity quickly opened to them the way to honor and wealth. Pompey's body-guard was composed of them, and it was the impetuous

charge of a body of Germans in Cæsar's service that turned the scale of victory at Pharsalia. They settled down as military colonists; they lounged as slaves by hundreds under patrician porticoes; or they enjoyed as freemen all the rights of citizens, voting at popular elections, having their appointed bench at the theatre and circus, and holding the highest offices in the army and the state. Augustus was alarmed at the number of barbarians within the city; but they could not be dispensed with. Their fidelity caused their selection for the Imperial body-guard. Rival emperors outbid each other to secure their services. Their valor decided the fortune of every battle-field. Maximin the Goth, even filled the Imperial throne. And year by year, as the Roman population dwindled away under the curse of slavery and the burdens of the intolerable fiscal system, larger and larger numbers of Germans were enlisted, till the army was in great part composed of them, and the chief offices at the court and in the state were filled by them. Meanwhile, they were being educated to Roman modes of thought and feeling; they studied in the schools, cultivated literature and the arts, and became orators, poets, and historians. Their natural sense of justice led them to admire the Roman jurisprudence, and their natural love of order recommended to them the wonderful organization of the Roman administrative system. Thus side by side grew up two nations, the conquerors and the conquered, preparing to change places, the possessors of the Empire unconsciously training their

heirs, who were destined to transmit to future ages all that was true and solid in the splendid fabric of Roman civilization⁴.

The German nations may be divided into five great families, each of which was grouped together by a similarity of origin, language, and social constitution, and the possession of common sanctuaries.

The largest and noblest of these five families, was the Goths. It has already been told how they had been led by Odin from the East to Scandinavia, and how a portion of their tribes, returning to the south and east, came into contact with the Greeks on the northern bank of the Danube. Their principal sanctuary was at Upsal. The Guttones, Heruli, Gepidi, Alani, Rugii, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths, all belonged to this family. Their modern representatives are the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, and Icelanders.

To the west of the Goths, between the Oder and the Vistula, dwelt the Vandals and Burgundians, whose language and national customs formed a link between the Goths and the three other families who were placed still farther to the west.

These three other groups of nations, known as the Sons of Ingo, Isto, and Irmin, who were the sons of Mannus, son of Tyr or Tius, the god of war, embraced all the tribes to the west. The Sons of Ingo were the Frisians, Cimbri, Angles⁵, Saxons, Marsi, and Chauci,

⁴ Ozanam, *Les Germains*, &c., ii. c. vi.

⁵ Freytag considers it doubtful whether the Angles were Sons of Ingo or of Irmin (*Bilder*, c. i. p. 39), but Von Raumer classes them

the last of whom were the oldest and the priestly tribe. They are now represented by the Low German nations.

The Sons of Isto included the Usipi, Teukteri, Sicambri, Chamavi, Brukteri, Chatti or Hessians, and Batavi. They formed themselves into two great confederacies known as the Allemanni and the Franks. The Usipi and Teukteri were the nucleus of the Allemanni in the third century; and the Sicambri, who were the oldest tribe and the religious head of the whole group, were the centre of the Frank confederacy, which embraced all the Sons of Isto who had not followed the Allemanni.

The Sons of Irmin dwelt farther in the heart of Germany. The Sæmnones were their oldest tribe and religious head. They also included the Hermanduri or Thuringians, the Marcomanni, Quadi, Cheruski, and Suevi, the last of whom took possession of Swabia, where they were afterwards intermixed with the Allemanni. All the modern High German nations are descendants of the sons of either Irmin or Isto, with some remnants of the Goths, Heruli, and Rugii in Bavaria and Austria.

The Germans maintained the relation to the Roman Empire above described, till towards the close of the fourth century, when a total revolution took place. They now ceased to advance as agriculturists with their families and herds, humbly petitioning for land, or indignantly avenging some insult or wrong; but

with the Low Germans, all of whom were Sons of Ingo (*Einwirkung des Christenthums auf der Althochdeutsche Sprache, l. i. c. i. 4*).

they came as military adventurers, attracted by the love of carnage and booty, overrunning a district, pillaging, burning, massacring indiscriminately all who fell in their way; destroying what they could not carry off, and retiring only to be soon succeeded by fresh marauding parties.

Various causes contributed to this great change in the character of the invasions. The most evident were the ambition of barbarian chiefs, and the ever-increasing hatred and contempt with which the Romans, and still more the Greeks, inspired the Germans. Notwithstanding the reverence and admiration which the Germans felt for the Eternal City, its world-wide supremacy during long ages, the heroic deeds of past generations, so that they felt proud of fighting under the Roman eagles, yet there was much, which, on closer contact, was most repulsive to them. While the Roman administrative system responded to their natural love of order and justice, its stern inflexibility was abhorrent to their free and independent spirit. Rome directed her efforts only to the conquest of nations and their complete subjugation beneath her iron yoke; but she never gave a thought to the formation of their consciences, or the cultivation of their hearts, for truly this task was beyond her power and sphere of action. Thus it came to pass that behind the civilization to which she trained the German, there lurked the barbarian with all his fierce passions still untamed. Then too, the Roman cruelty and avarice were revolting to the Germans; for, great as was their own love of blood and spoil, it was

coupled with the excitement of heroic deeds, and far different from the cold, selfish passions of the Roman, united as they too often were with physical weakness and moral degradation. Hence it was, that while the Romans looked with wonder on those barbarians who knew not what fear meant, and whose honor and truth could be implicitly trusted, the Germans felt only scorn and hatred for those who hired them. And these feelings were intensified towards the Greeks; for while they were incapable of appreciating their refinement, they beheld with contempt and disgust the sycophancy, falsehood, meanness, and empty ostentation which characterized the Byzantine Court. Latin was commonly spoken by the Germans, but they never condescended to speak Greek⁶.

Every German who crossed the frontier was conscious of his own superiority; he saw that military renown, the favor of princes, gold, silver, slaves, luxurious revels, and all the blandishments of sensuality, were within his reach; and though all could not win the highest prizes, yet this uncertainty only added zest to the great game of chance. As reports of these allurements, with the enticing adjuncts of fertile land, sunny skies, and balmy climate, were carried back to the rude, forest homes, and circulated through the wide wilderness, it was only natural that ambitious chiefs should be attracted like vultures to the dying Empire, and that restless warriors should vow themselves to follow their favourite heroes to the conquest of the glittering prize.

⁶ Freytag, *Bilder*, c. ii. p. 107.

But besides these general reasons for the change in the character of the invasions, a more special cause has been found in a revolution, which occurred about this time on the borders of China⁷. The impulse given on the farthest limits of Asia, thrilled like an electric shock to the most distant point of Europe. All the dwellers in the vast wilderness from the Wall of China to the Rhine and Scandinavia, were disturbed; and that mighty ocean of nations, Germans, Slaves, Sarmatians, Huns, Tatars, heaving from the foundations on which it had rested for ages, was driven from east to west, rushing wave after wave, each pressing on the one immediately before it, and all forcing on those in front, till they broke upon the Roman Empire. This great movement dates from A.D. 376, when the Visigoths, who had long been settled on the northern bank of the Danube, were driven across the river by the advance of the Huns; and it is said to have ended about A.D. 600; though the restless spirit which it created, continued through the early middle ages, till the development of the feudal system tied down the great body of the people to the soil on which they dwelt, and the Crusades turned the current of the stream back upon the East.

Across the Danube, the Alps, the Rhine, the Rhone, the Pyrenees, and over the Hellespont, flocked millions of Goths, Quadi, Marcomanni, Hermanduri, Vandals, Burgundians, Franks, Slaves, Huns, Sarmatians, Lombards, and others, too numerous to name; while Scots, Picts, Angles, and Danes overran Britain, and made

⁷ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, c. xxx.

descents on the coasts of Gaul. Sometimes they came in great hordes under leaders of renown, Alaric, Rhadagaisus, Genseric, Odoacer, Theodoric, and Attila, who, though a Hun and not a German, took, with his followers of the same nationality, so prominent a part in these invasions, that his name ought not to be here omitted. At other times smaller bands of barbarians gathered round a favourite hero, their only bond of union the common thirst for blood and plunder; and such marauders were naturally more pitiless and destructive in proportion to their smaller numbers. Often, too, straggling detachments would entrench themselves in a ruined fort, and maintaining themselves as brigands, would be the scourge of the neighbourhood.

No language can adequately depict the frightful misery of that terrible period. As the invading hosts passed along, ruined cities, heaps of corpses, smoking farms, marked their course. The devastated land was sown every where with brambles, to be succeeded only by impenetrable forests. Man and domestic animals disappeared from entire districts, and were replaced by wolves, bears, buffalos, bisons, and deer. Of the Vandal invasion of Auvergne in the beginning of the fifth century, it was said, that "if the entire ocean had overflowed the fields of Gaul, its vast waves would have made fewer ruins³." Treves was sacked five times, and after the third, sack only, Salvian

³ S. Prosper of Aquitaine, *De Provid. divin.* p. 618, ed. Migne. Montalambert, *Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. 3.

wrote, "The first city in Gaul was but a sepulchre. Those whom the enemy spared, succumbed to the calamities which succeeded. Some died of their wounds; others perished of hunger and cold; and thus in different ways all went together to the tomb. I have seen, and my eyes have endured the sight of bodies of men and women, naked, torn by dogs and birds of prey, lying in the streets which they polluted. The infection of the dead bodies killed the living, and death, so to say, was exhaled from the dead⁹."

At the beginning of the sixth century there were in the kingdom of Burgundy alone no less than six districts to the north of the Rhone, which were too truly called "deserts," and were totally devoid of population and cultivation. Switzerland and Savoy were little more than one vast forest¹. In Spain the inhabitants, terrified by the reports that crossed the Pyrenees, gave up their towns and all they possessed to the invading hosts of Suevi, Alani, and Vandals, who divided the whole by lot among themselves. Famine and pestilence succeeded to the horrors of war and pillage. Such was the wretchedness of the conquered, that they fed on human flesh, mothers eating their own children; while the wild beasts, satiated with the dead, fell upon the living². As for unhappy Italy, which was the great centre of attraction, it endured within fifty years no less than four great invasions, those of Rhadagaisus and Attila

⁹ Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. vi.

¹ Montalambert, *Moines d'Occident*, tom. ii. l. 8, c. 1.

² *Idac. Chronic.* Ozanam, *Les Germains*, &c., c. vii. p. 365.

in the north, and those of Alaric and Genseric, who laid waste the south and pillaged Rome, the former for three days, and the latter for no less than a fortnight. The populous district which had once been adorned with the flourishing cities of Bologna, Modena, Rhegium, and Placentia, was totally ruined³; the Emilia, Tuscany, and the adjacent provinces, were almost depopulated⁴; and even to the present day, the abiding evidence of these barbarian devastations may be seen in the diminished population, and uncultivated or unhealthy condition of wide districts, which were in past times a continuous lovely garden, thickly studded with luxurious country-houses. To these material calamities was added the loss of that spiritual influence and sympathy, which unite men into civilized society, and thus multiply the results of individual talent and labor.

Regular communications being interrupted, and all sense of security lost, industry and the hope of future progress were crushed, society was paralyzed, and men quickly fell back into that state of isolation, which distinguishes the rude barbarian from the civilized man⁵. So tremendous was the calamity that even saints were appalled by it. After the first sack of Rome, S. Jerome wrote that his voice failed him, and sobs choked his utterance, for the terrible rumor that reached him,

³ S. Ambrose, Ep. 39; ap. Muratori, *Antichità*, t. i. Dissert. 29, p. 354.

⁴ Pope Gelasius, Ep. ad Andromachum; ap. Baronius, *Annal. Eccles.* A.D. 469.

⁵ Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire*, t. i. p. 297; apud Michelet, *Hist. France*, l. ii. c. i.

that the city which had captured the whole world, was herself captured⁶. S. Augustine, unable to endure the sufferings of his flock, during the Vandal invasion of Africa, prayed that God would "give His servant strength to bear His will, or at least take him to Himself out of this world". S. Gregory, overwhelmed by the cruelties practised by the Lombards, was unable to continue his homilies on Ezekiel, and excused himself by saying, "Let no one blame me, . . . because our tribulations are increased beyond measure. On all sides we are surrounded by swords, on all sides we see only danger and death. Some return to us with their hands cut off; and others, we hear, are killed or carried away as slaves. I am constrained to suspend the exposition of the Holy Scripture, because my life is henceforth a burden to me⁸." In common with the Church in general, he believed that this could be nought else than the last tribulation preceding the end of the world.

Nor is it only over that old heroic world, round which still lingers such a halo of fascination, that one has to mourn. The fate of the Germans during that long *wanderzeit* (wandering time), as it is graphically styled, is scarcely less deplorable. The defenders of the Empire, as well as its assailants, were, for the most part, Germans, and thus, in the innumerable battles that were fought, whatever were their issue, it was

⁶ Hieronym. Epist. ad Principian; Ozanam, *Les Germains*, &c., c. vii. p. 367.

⁷ Possidius, Vit. S. Augustin. c. 28. Ozanam, *Ibid.* 368.

⁸ S. Greg. Mag. In Ezekiel. Homil. 18. Ozanam, *Ibid.* p. 370.

always German blood that dyed the field. Also, it often happened that portions of the same nation or tribe were arrayed on each side, the vow of service to Rome superseding, according to German custom, the claims of nationality and kindred; and consequently, the contest assumed, in some degree, the form of a civil war. Moreover, it was inexpressibly sad to see those young barbarians issuing from their forests simple, true, lion-hearted, then carried away by the fierce thirst for blood and gold, throwing off all those associations of home and fatherland, which had formed the nucleus of their natural virtues, adding the vices of civilization to those of the savage, and thus sinking into the foulest depths of Roman sensuality and corruption.

When one considers the gigantic nature of the catastrophe, one wonders how any fragment of that Roman world outlived the storm, and survived, not only to attest its greatness, but to transmit its powerful influence to modern society. Happily the very extent of the misfortune became its alleviation. For when a tract of country had been laid waste by fire and sword, it offered no attraction to future marauders; and thus the few wretched surviving inhabitants were left unmolested for a time, to sow and reap in the patches of land which they could rescue from the advancing forest, while they sheltered themselves in the blackened and crumbling ruins of splendid palaces and temples. In other places the relics of society shut themselves up in towns, which they fortified so as to resist the attacks of the smaller bodies of depredators; and here they

carried on the municipal government of Roman colonies, and transmitted to the modern world that peculiar spirit of city life, which was one of the great characteristics of ancient Rome. In like manner the miserable survivors from the ravages in North Italy, took refuge in the marshes and lagoons on its eastern coast, where, protected by their poverty and the inaccessible character of their retreat, they formed themselves into a society on the model of the Roman republic, from which in course of centuries emerged the beautiful Queen of the Adriatic.

While thus, on the one hand, the Roman forms of government were preserved, on the other, the new world which was springing from the ruins of classical antiquity, was being inoculated with the freer and purer German spirit. Fragments of tribes, weary of wandering, would separate themselves from the invading hosts, settle down on some spot that took their fancy, and follow the agricultural life of their old forest home. Too often they would be disturbed, and driven forward by succeeding waves of invasion; but notwithstanding, it was through such settlements that the German race and the German spirit, gradually took root on the soil of the old Empire.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH IN THE STORM.

BUT the true saviour of Europe and of Christianity at this period was the Church. Her first conquests over the Germans must have dated from the Apostolic age. Early in the second century S. Justin wrote, "There is not a single race, whether of Greeks or barbarians, whether they dwell in wagons, or in tents, or sleep without a roof under the open sky, who do not offer prayers to the Father of all things in the name of the Lord Jesus¹." A few years later S. Irenæus said, that though "languages differ, tradition does not vary; and the Churches founded in Germany have no other law or doctrine than those of the Iberians and Celts, of the East and Asia, and the others established in the centre of the world²." Tertullian also mentions "the Sarmatians and Dacians, Scythians and Germans³," among the nations who had received the faith.

¹ S. Justin. Dial. cum Tryph. § 117. Ozanam, *Civilisation Chrétienne*, c. i. p. 2.

² S. Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.* i. 10.

³ Tertullian, *Adv. Judæos*, 7.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the names of German bishops appear in the records of councils. Maternus, Bishop of Cologne, assisted at a council in Rome, A.D. 313. In the following year, Agritius, Bishop of Treves, and also Maternus, took part in the Council of Arles, at which thirty bishops were present. Theophilus, Metropolitan of the Goths, was one of the fathers of the Council of Nicæa. By the beginning of the fifth century Christianity was the dominant religion among the Germans in the Roman provinces. In the scanty records of that time now extant, are to be found the names of Bishops of Treves, Cologne, Tongres, Metz, and Toul in the north, of Coire, Laybach, Pettau, Lauriacum, and Tiburnia in the south, and of bishops without fixed sees in Rhætia and Noricum. It further appears from the history of S. Severin, that all the orders of clergy were established; hermits, monks, and nuns existed; and the usual liturgical forms of worship were carried out. This young German Church had, moreover, the fullest credentials of orthodoxy. For it was founded by the successors of S. Peter⁴, and it was consecrated by the blood of its martyrs⁵ during the Pagan persecutions,

⁴ Pope Innocent I. wrote, "In omnem Italiam, Gallias . . . nullum instituisse ecclesias, nisi eos quos venerabilis apostolus Petrus aut ejus successores constituerunt sacerdotes." Ep. ad Decent. Eugub. ap. Mansi, iii. p. 1028. Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét. c. i. p. 4.* Gaul then included Rhætia, Noricum, and the two German provinces.

⁵ S. Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, was one of the martyrs under Diocletian; and S. Sabas and his companions were put to death by their fellow-countrymen, the Goths, A.D. 372.

and by the sufferings of its confessors at the hands of the Arians.

The circumstances of the age and the peculiar characteristics of the Germans, greatly assisted their conversion. Christian bishops and priests were often carried captive into Germany, where their saintly lives, their eloquence, and their miraculous gifts, brought about the conversion of whole tribes⁶. When, on the contrary, the Germans were led to the south as captives, or wandered thither voluntarily, their worship of nature lost its hold on them. They missed the sacred oak, the grove, the spring, or the hill, which was the sanctuary of their gods. The whole aspect of nature, the seasons, and even the stars in heaven were changed, so that they could no longer carry out their daily routine of life under the guidance of their familiar deities. Perplexed by the strange novelty that met them on all sides, they would naturally look around to discover the new gods, to whom they must trust for aid and blessing. On the one hand, they would behold the gorgeous Pagan worship, associated with ideals of beauty and philosophy which were unintelligible to them, and with foul corruptions which were revolting to their better nature, while they would find that in point of depth and earnestness, especially as to the doctrine of a future life, it was far inferior to their own national religion. So palpable was this inferiority that Roman Paganism had no hold on the Germans, though the Romans were wont to admire the firm faith

⁶ Sozomen, *Hist. Eccles.* l. ii. c. 6.

of the Germans, and often adopted their superstitions⁷. On the other hand, they would find the Christian Church, whose simple creed was easily understood, and could even be connected with their own oldest national traditions and customs. Its poverty and chastity, the equality and fraternal union of its members, their devotion to the Lord to whose service they were vowed, their heroism as martyrs, were the supernatural expression of those virtues, which they had been wont to prize in their old forest home. When they became acquainted with the central dogma of the Incarnation, and learned that as its necessary consequence, man is admitted to loving union with God through the sacraments, that Mary is the common mother of God and of men, and that the saints enjoy everlasting communion with each other, their warm affections and their yearnings after the invisible, found a development of which they had never dreamt. And even the reverence which the majesty of Rome involuntarily commanded, would be deepened when they came to look upon the Eternal City, not as the capital of an empire tottering to its ruin, but as the abode of the Vicar of the Lord of the Universe, and the earthly seat of that heavenly kingdom which would endure for ever in a world without end.

The presence of many great saints in Germany and Gaul during the fourth century, must have helped on the work of conversion. S. Hilary was at Poitiers, and S. Martin at Tours. S. Athanasius sought refuge in

⁷ Ozanam, *Les Germains*, c. vii. p. 336.

Treves during the Arian persecution; S. Jerome went thither to study; and there S. Ambrose was born. S. Ambrose was so venerated by the Germans, that Frigtil, queen of the Marcomanni who were settled in Swabia, sent messengers with gifts to him, to inquire how she ought to believe and pray; whereupon he wrote her a letter, which was the means of converting the entire nation. Again, Arbogastes, the Frank chief, who was for a time the arbiter of the destinies of Gaul⁸, was asked one day by some other chiefs whether he knew Ambrose; and when he answered that he was beloved by him, and had often sat at table with him, they exclaimed, "We no longer wonder that thou conquerest thine enemies, since thou art the friend of a man who says to the sun, 'Stand thou still,' and it stands still."

While the Church thus attracted reverence even from the Pagan Germans, their natural virtues were fully appreciated by the Christians. Comparing them to the Romans, Salvian says⁹, "You think that you are better than the barbarians; they are heretics, and you are orthodox. I answer, that by your faith you are better; but by your lives, I say it with tears, you are worse. You know the law and break it; they are heretics and know it not. The Goths are perfidious, but modest;

⁸ He attempted to erect an independent empire in Gaul, and after killing Valentinian II., gave the imperial crown to Eugenius, A.D. 392. After a short reign of two years Eugenius was defeated and beheaded at Aquileia by Theodosius the Great, A.D. 394, and Arbogastes committed suicide. Rohrbacher, *Hist. Egl. t. vii. l. xxxvi. pp. 292—304.*

⁹ Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, l. iv.

the Alani are voluptuous, but faithful; the Franks are liars, but hospitable; the cruelty of the Saxons inspires horror, but their chastity calls forth praise. And we wonder that God should have delivered up our provinces to the barbarians, whose modesty purifies the land, which Roman debauchery had so deeply polluted."

It must not, however, be supposed that the Church escaped the calamities of that dark time. On the contrary she shared the common suffering. Churches and monasteries were pillaged and burnt; bishops and priests were tortured and massacred. But as soon as the tide of blood had swept by, her Divine character and mission would appear in the comfort and support that she afforded to the afflicted. However great might have been her own losses, whatever remained to her was given to the destitute, while she cheered the broken-hearted by words of faith and hope, and labored with intelligent activity to repair the ruin.

Often, however, her influence with the barbarians was used to avert, or at least to mitigate their ravages. When Rome was sacked by Alaric, who was an Arian, while the greater part of his army were Pagans, fewer senators were plundered than Sylla had killed in his last proscription alone. The churches were respected, and no blow was struck, and no pillage committed in them. When a soldier found in a house which he had forcibly entered, gold and silver vessels of great value, which he was told belonged to the basilica of S. Peter, he forbore to touch the tempting prize till he should

receive orders from Alaric as to its disposal. Then¹, by Alaric's command, the trumpets sounded a truce, the fugitives who had been expecting each moment to be killed, issued from their hiding-places, a grand procession was formed, the barbarians carried the precious vessels on their heads, victors and vanquished joined in singing hymns of praise, and thus they were borne in triumph to S. Peter's. "He must be blind," exclaims S. Augustine², "who does not recognize in this the power of Christ and the blessings of a Christian age."

Nor was this a solitary instance of the Church's influence. In the year 447, the Armoricans having revolted, the imperial minister, Ætius, sent Eocari, king of the Alani, to chastise them by laying waste the province. In the extremity of terror the Armoricans sent to S. Germain of Auxerre, beseeching him to come to their aid. S. Germain hurried to the spot, met Eocari at the head of his army, and humbly entreated him to spare the contrite Armoricans. But his prayers were unheeded. Then seizing the fierce chief's bridle, he checked his advance, while he boldly reproached him with all the sins of his life. Awe-struck by the bishop's daring and solemn admonitions, the barbarian for once was merciful, and withdrew his army³.

In the year 451 the terrible Attila crossed the Rhine at the head of an army of from five to seven hundred thousand barbarians. Town after town was taken,

¹ Paul Oros. vii. 28.

² S. August. Civitat. Dei, l. vii.

³ Rohrbacher, t. viii. l. 40; p. 156.

pillaged, and burnt ; the devastation being so complete, that the escape of the chapel of S. Stephen at Metz has been deemed worthy of record.

As the invaders approached Troyes the inhabitants were in an agony of terror. S. Loup, their bishop, prayed, wept, and fasted, day and night in their behalf, till at length, animated by supernatural hope and confidence, he resolved to go forth and meet the dreaded foe. Vested in full pontificals, he stood face to face with Attila, and boldly demanded, "Who art thou who dost conquer so many kings and nations, and destroy so many cities, and wishest to subjugate the universe?" "I am the King of the Huns, the scourge of God," answered Attila. "If thou art the scourge of God," replied S. Loup, "beware that thou dost naught but what is permitted thee by Him who inspires and governs thee." Filled with reverence for God's minister, the Pagan chief was softened, and promised to spare the town, through which his army accordingly passed without committing any violence.

In Paris the alarm was so great that the inhabitants were preparing to retire to some more strongly fortified place, but S. G  n  vi  ve, the poor shepherdess, whose sanctity had won their confidence, exhorted them not to fly, but to join her in prayer and fasting ; assuring them that Paris would be uninjured, while the place to which they thought of going would be destroyed. With simple faith they obeyed her, and the event verified her words.

Orleans was besieged, but S. Aignan, the bishop,

had foreseen the danger, and gone to Arles to demand succour from Ætius, the Imperial general. Then hurrying back to the post of danger, he was always to be seen on the walls, encouraging the inhabitants to defend the town, watching anxiously for the promised aid, or praying fervently to God. At the last moment, when all seemed hopeless and the gates had actually been forced, a large army under Ætius and Theodoric the Visigoth suddenly appeared, and completely routed the Huns.

Attila reunited his scattered forces on a plain near Châlons, where one of the greatest battles on record was fought. The combatants on both sides amounted to a million, of whom 300,000 were left dead on the field. Theodoric was killed; Ætius narrowly escaped in the darkness of the night; and flight alone saved Attila⁴. Retreating through the part of Belgium, from Louvain to the Rhine, then called Thuringia, of which Tongres was the capital, he crossed the Rhine by the bridge at Cologne, and entered that city about the 21st of October⁵.

In Cologne Attila found, not only the usual conflux of terrified fugitives from the neighborhood, but also a large party of British women, chiefly virgins, who

⁴ Rohrbacher, t. viii. l. 40, p. 221. Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét.* c. ii. Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*, c. 36—43.

⁵ *Acta SS.* Oct. 21, *De S. Ursula et Sociabus*. In this very learned article, by Father Victor de Buck, will be found the historical verification of the history of S. Ursula and her companions as here given. A popular summary of it is contained in Cardinal Wiseman's essay on "The Truth of supposed Legends," in "*Essays on Religion and Literature*," edited by H. E. Manning, 1865.

flying from the Saxon invaders of Britain, had crossed to Holland under the guidance of S. Ursula and S. Pinnosa, a British king's daughter, with some men to protect them, and had gone thence to Cologne. Some of the British virgins appear to have accompanied the Bishop S. Servatius to Rome, where he went in the year 450 to pray at the tombs of S. Peter and S. Paul, in whom lay his only hope of escape from Attila's threatened invasion; but the greater part remained in Cologne.

Attila and his Huns, exasperated by their late defeat, and infuriated by the insuperable chastity of these women, collected them in a field, now called S. Ursula's Acker, and massacred them all by shooting them with bows and arrows. When the Huns had departed, the citizens came out of their hiding-places, and finding this great number of virgins and others lying where they had fallen, they got sarcophagi, or made graves, and collecting their blood, buried them reverently, and erected a basilica in their honor. About fifty years after the martyrdom, Clematius, "who came from the East," being "terrified by fiery visions, and by the great majesty and holiness of these virgins, rebuilt this basilica," as is said on the inscription still to be seen there. A convent too was built to their honor, and an extraordinary devotion to them sprang up and exists in Cologne to the present day.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries some translations of the relics took place, but the greater part of the martyrs remained undisturbed till, on the 2nd of

July, A.D. 1640, there was a formal exhumation in the presence of the learned Jesuits, Papebroch and Crombach, who published an account of what they saw. Some were found separately in stone sarcophagi; but the greater number were buried in fosses sixty feet long, sixteen wide, and eight deep, not thrown in promiscuously as is done in cases of pestilence, but placed regularly in two rows, side by side, at the distance of a foot from each other, and in three tiers one above another, a quantity of earth being laid between the tiers. All these skeletons were entire, their arms were crossed on their bosoms, their faces looked towards the east, they were dressed as the Church had ordered in the case of martyrs, and beside almost every one of them was a vessel containing blood, or sand tinged with blood. The form of their skulls proved their Celtic origin, and their skeletons showed that all, except a few children and about ten or fifteen men out of a hundred, were strong healthy young women, and not the promiscuous victims of war or pestilence. Above these three tiers of skeletons was a fourth tier, consisting of separate bones and an immense quantity of arrows, some of them sticking in the skulls and other bones, thus proving that they had been killed by the Huns, who alone used bows and arrows as instruments of death. And with those bones also were placed vessels of blood and bloody sand. The enormous multitude of skulls and bones, which line the Golden Chamber in the Church of S. Ursula at Cologne, in addition to great numbers that have been

sent to churches in other places, have led to the conjecture, that among them are included the victims of an indiscriminate massacre of all the women in the town, in which the Huns would probably have indulged after their rage had been excited by the virtue of the British virgins.

The following year Attila reappeared suddenly in Pannonia. The Romans had been lulled into a delusive negligence by the victory at Châlons, and had flattered themselves that he was finally overthrown. His unexpected return created a general panic. Ætius, instead of closing the passage of the Alps, thought only of saving himself by flight, and tried to persuade the Emperor Valentinian III. to go with him into Gaul; but shame overcame terror, and Valentinian shut himself up in Rome. Meanwhile, Attila advanced with fire and sword through Pannonia and Noricum into Italy. Augsburg, Aquileia, Concordia, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, were pillaged and burnt; while Milan and Pavia were so fortunate as to escape with pillage alone. Resistance was vain, and Valentinian's only hope was negotiation. But who would dare to go as ambassador to the ferocious barbarian? S. Leo, the Pope, offered himself for the perilous office, and accompanied by two senators of consular rank, he repaired to the camp of Attila, on the banks of the Mincio, near Mantua. He was at once admitted to an interview, for Attila was overjoyed to see one whose fame had already reached him. The contrast between the king and the saint was striking.

Attila's bearing was proud and defiant; but his large head, flat nose, small restless eye, dark complexion, light beard and grey hair, his short stature, and unusually broad chest, made him look so hideous, that he was generally said to be of demon-birth. S. Leo, on the contrary, bore himself meekly and humbly, like Him whose Vicar he was; but the irrepressible light of sanctity that beamed in his countenance, gave him an air of supernatural majesty. Attila was so impressed by his saintliness, his eloquence, and his pontifical character, that he readily consented to evacuate Italy on the payment of a large sum. He did so the more willingly, because S. Peter and S. Paul are said to have appeared to him, and threatened him with death, if he rejected the prayer of their successor⁶. He had, moreover, a superstitious dread of entering Rome, because Alaric had not long survived his doing so.

One of the most interesting episodes of this time, is the history of S. Severin, the Apostle of Noricum⁷. Nothing is known of his birth or his life, till he appears as a hermit, living with a few companions on the confines of Pannonia and Noricum. He spoke Latin, but his habits were those of the Eastern deserts, while his military and administrative talents made it probable, that he had formerly held high offices in the army and the state. He was looked upon as the bulwark of the

⁶ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, c. xxxv. Baronius, *Annal. Eccles.* A.D. 452. Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*, c. xlii. Rohrbacher, t. viii. l. xl. p. 269.

⁷ Vit. S. Severin: Auctore Eugipio, ejus Discipulo. Pez, *Script. Rer. Austriac.* t. i. p. 62.

surrounding country. Wherever danger threatened, he was summoned; and when the people saw him walking barefoot on the ice, always fasting till sunset, sleeping on a hair-cloth, and dead to all human infirmity, they felt as if an angel from God had come to help them. He took on himself the direction of the military defence of the province, collecting the country population into the towns, deciding which were the places most capable of defence, and ordering the others to be abandoned. At the same time he preached repentance, led the people to confession and amendment of life, and collected money to ransom captives, feed the poor, and provide for the public exigencies. The result was, that the inhabitants of Salzburg and Passau having disregarded his advice, these towns fell a prey to the invaders; but those whom he collected in Lauriacum, and encouraged by his words and example, made a brave stand, till, all further resistance seeming hopeless, he himself went to the fierce barbarian king, and obtained the most favorable terms for them. Then, on the strength of his word alone, the besieged returned to their homes, tilled their fields, and rebuilt the ruined cities.

S. Severin's reputation stood very high with all the German tribes. When the Allemanni were ravaging the country round Passau, Gibold their king expressed a wish to see him. S. Severin obeyed his summons, and spoke so boldly to him, that he at once put a stop to the ravages and set the captives free, confessing that never, even in moments of the most imminent

danger, had he trembled as he had done before that old man.

One day a party of barbarian recruits for the Imperial guard, came to ask his blessing before their departure. Among them was a young Herulian, whose gigantic stature obliged him to stoop as he entered the lowly cell. "Go to Italy," said the saint to him; "you are now clothed in skins, but you will soon lavish gifts on multitudes." The young man was Odoacer, who gave the final blow to the Western Empire. As King of Italy he respected the feelings and prejudices of the conquered, enforced the Roman laws, entrusted the government to Roman officials, protected the clergy and monks, and by his wisdom and humanity mitigated the misery of Italy^s. Who can say what share S. Severin's influence may have had in fostering the moderation and clemency, which distinguished Odoacer from the other barbarian conquerors? After he became King of Italy he wrote to S. Severin, reminding him of his prophetic words, and at his request pardoned a man who was condemned to exile.

S. Severin also took the greatest pains to reclaim the Rugii from the Arian heresy. He was in the habit of inviting their chiefs to his cell, where he would converse familiarly with them, taking the most lively interest in their temporal concerns. When he was dying he sent for their king and queen, Feva and Gisa. After he had exhorted the king always to keep God

^s Gibbon, c. xxxvi.

in his thoughts, and to treat his subjects gently, he laid his hand on the barbarian's heart, and turning to the queen, who was very cruel and was always urging her husband on to acts of oppression, he said to her, "Gisa, lovest thou this soul more than gold and silver?" And when she answered, like a true German wife, that she did so love him, he replied, "Well, then, cease to oppress the just, lest their oppression prove your ruin. I beseech you both at this moment when I am returning to my Master, to abstain from evil, and to do such good works as may be an honor to your lives." Thus did the old Roman hermit expire between his two weeping German children. But his influence did not end with his life. His memory was long cherished, and the order which he established, together with the traditions that he left, were the means of preserving Christianity and civilization in Noricum for two hundred years under various changes of barbarian rulers⁹.

Thus did the Church, with her wonderful wisdom and flexibility, adapt her mission to the circumstances and needs of the time. The Empire was doomed, and no earthly power could avert its fall. But she could retard the catastrophe, and bridge over the chaotic period of the invasions, so as to save from the wreck of the old world all that was most valuable for the new. This was her great work. And, accordingly, every town from which she diverted the steps of the destroyers, every year of respite that she obtained for a

⁹ Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét.*, c. ii.

city or province, every Roman whom she strengthened by her word and example, and every barbarian whose heart she touched by her loving gentleness, or awed by her supernatural courage, was so much gained for Christianity and civilization.

But while the Church was thus laboring to save her elder children, and to win the new family that the invasions were bringing her, the latter were slipping out of her grasp. It has been already mentioned that Theophilus, Metropolitan of the Goths, assisted at the Council of Nicæa. His successor was Ulfilas, a Cappadocian, who translated the Bible into Gothic. This translation gave such an impulse to the study of the Holy Scriptures, that many Goths corresponded with S. Jerome, comparing their own version to the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts, and S. Jerome ranked their critical talent above that of the Greeks. When in the year 376 the Huns began to press on the rear of the Goths, Ulfilas was sent to ask aid from the Emperor Valens. Unhappily Valens was an Arian, and the Arian party was dominant at his court. Either to further his suit, or possibly deceived by the subtleties of the Arians, Ulfilas adopted their heresy, and carried it back to his diocese. The infection spread quickly from tribe to tribe, and, before many years had elapsed, all the nations belonging to the two eastern divisions of the German family, who were the noblest of the race, and had shown most aptitude for civilization, fell into heresy and were lost to the Church. Under the cold shade of a rationalistic creed, the flow of their

young life was dried up and struck with palsy¹; and thus all the hopes which had been inspired by their simplicity, purity, and healthy vigor, vanished like a dream. The effects of this paralysis may be seen in the subsequent history of these nations. The Goths, who took the most prominent part in the overthrow of the Roman Empire, no longer possess a nationality, and their language, after attaining to a literature of its own, died out in the seventh century². The Vandals have vanished. Only a small remnant of the Eastern Burgundians is to be found in Berne; while the existence of the Heruli, Rugii, and other kindred tribes in Bavaria and Austria, is a mere conjecture³.

By the end of the fifth century Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Heruli, Rugii, Vandals, Burgundians, and Suevi, with their minor kindred tribes, were Arians; while the Lombards, Gepidi, Alani, Franks, Saxons, and all the other sons of Isto, Ingo, and Irmin, were Pagans. The Church retained her hold only on the thinly scattered Roman and Gallo-Roman population, depressed by long suffering, enfeebled by a corrupt civilization, and kept alive only by the heroic virtue of a few bishops and priests. Never had the Christian horizon been darker. But it is at the darkest moment of the night that the first faint streak of light announces the coming dawn.

¹ Michelet, *Hist. France*, l. ii. c. i.

² Von Raumer, *Einwirkung*, l. i. c. i.

³ Von Raumer, l. ii. c. 2.

PART II.

THE FRANKS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ELDEST SON OF THE CHURCH.

ON Christmas Day, A.D. 496, the City of Rheims was all astir. A grand Christian function was about to be solemnized. Rich tapestries carpeted the streets and hung in festoons round the windows and porticos. The cathedral was brilliantly lighted with scented tapers; exquisite perfumes exhaled from the sanctuary; the baptismal font and the holy oils were prepared; bishops and priests stood at the principal entrance in joyful expectation. A solemn procession chanting litanies and hymns, issued from the royal palace. At its head were borne the Cross and the Book of the Gospels; next walked the saintly Bishop Remi, leading a barbarian chief by the hand; then came the queen and two princesses, sisters to the chief, followed by three thousand barbarian warriors and their families. As they passed along, crowds of Pagans flocked to gaze at the strange spectacle. Enchanted and awed by the religious pomp and sweet solemnity that breathed around, the chief said simply to the bishop, "Father, is this the kingdom of Jesus Christ which you promised

me?" "No, my son," answered the bishop, "it is only the beginning of the road which leads to it." On their arrival at the cathedral, the chief asked for baptism, whereupon the bishop said, "Sicamber, bow thy head meekly; burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burnt¹." After publicly professing the Catholic faith, the chief stepped into the font, and the three thousand warriors with their families, followed him. The chief was Clovis, the Long-Haired Merovingian king of the Salian Franks: and this day was the birthday of the French Catholic nation.

There are critical events in the world's history, which, though there was nothing extraordinary in their outward circumstances, seem to have inspired contemporaries with an unaccountable presentiment of their paramount importance. The baptism of Clovis was an event of this class. What could it avail that a single rude chief was baptized, or that the warriors vowed to his service followed him to the font as readily as they would have done to the battle-field? Many a chief with his warriors had been thus received into the Church, and yet now she was none the better for them. At the best there were only a few thousand more Christians in France, and they were as nothing among so many heretics and pagans. Notwithstanding, the Church hailed the event as a great crisis. S. Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, wrote, "Behold, a new light has risen in the West²."

¹ Greg. Tur. l. ii. n. 31. Rohrbacher, t. viii. l. xlii. p. 486.

² Ep. xli. Aviti Vienn. Greg. Tur. l. ii. 31.

And Pope Anastasius said in a letter to Clovis³, "We congratulate ourselves, most illustrious son, that your entrance into the Christian faith is contemporary with our entrance on the pontificate. For must not S. Peter's successor feel a thrill of joy, when he beholds the nations run towards him, to fill the net, which the fisher of men, the doorkeeper of heaven, was ordered to cast into the sea. Our bark is tossed about by a furious tempest. But we hope against hope; and we praise God that He has drawn you out of darkness, in order to give His Church a protector capable of defending her against all her enemies." This joy and hope were a true intuition, which the course of modern ages has verified.

Clovis was king of only the Salian Franks; but already he was distinguished by his prowess and the success of his arms. He had married Clotilda, niece of Gondebald, King of the Burgundians. Happily she was a Catholic, though the Burgundians had become Arians under Gondebald, A.D. 490. She often tried to persuade Clovis of the worthlessness of his gods; and when her first son was born, she insisted on his being baptized. But as he died a week after, Clovis ascribed his death to his not having been consecrated to the gods of his nation. Notwithstanding, Clotilda had her second son baptized; and when he also fell ill shortly afterwards, Clovis said, "It cannot be otherwise than that he should die, since he has been baptized in the

³ Ep. Anastas. Pap. D. Achery Spicil. iii. 304. Ozanam, *Civil Chrét.* c. ii. p. 54. Rohrbacher, t. viii. l. xliii. p. 488.

name of your Christ." But his life was granted to his mother's prayers, and he recovered.

Some time after the Allemanni, settled in Alsace and Lorraine, attacked the Ripuarian Franks, who were established at Cologne. Clovis marched to the aid of the latter, and fought a great battle at Tolbiac, now Zulpich, in the territory of Juliers. Before the fight began he invoked his national gods, but the day seemed to be going against him; for the King of the Ripuarians being disabled by a wound, his troops took to flight, and those of Clovis were about to follow their example. Then remembering the words of his wife, Clovis cried with tears to Jesus, the God of Clotilda, to help him, promising to be baptized if victory were granted him. Scarcely had he finished this prayer when the Allemanni began to give way, and their king being killed, they threw down their arms, and submitted to Clovis. He accordingly put a stop to the slaughter, and united them to his own people.

Clovis lost no time in fulfilling his vow. On his march back to Rheims he sent for S. Vedast or Vaast, a priest of Toul, of great reputation for sanctity, in order to be instructed by him in the Catholic faith; and the miraculous cure of a blind man by S. Vaast, further confirmed his faith. But still there was a struggle in his heart. For it seemed to him a hard thing to adore Jesus, an unarmed God, who did not belong to the race of Thor or Woden. Then, too, he feared the prejudices of his subjects. They had de-throned his father in disgust, and they might do the

like to him; for his royal title rested on his descent from Woden, and in abandoning his national gods he was, in fact, abdicating his own divine right to the throne of the Salian Franks. But these difficulties were happily overcome. His personal followers joyfully accepted baptism; and though great numbers of Franks adhered to paganism, and even for centuries Christians and Pagans sat side by side at the king's table, and heathen rites mingled with Christian blessings on the food, yet the event proved that the royal authority was strengthened, instead of weakened, by the adoption of Clovis as the first-born son of the Church.

The night before the baptism S. Remi paid a private visit to Clovis and Clotilda. After giving them much instruction about their future lives, he assured them, that if they and their posterity would keep God's law faithfully, they should inherit the power of the Roman Empire, exalt the Church, restrain the incursions of other nations, and reign most gloriously. Clovis at once grasped the idea that S. Remi set before him, and transmitted it as an heirloom to his successors. From that time the formation of a compact dominion, inviolable by foreign foes, the maintenance of Catholic unity, and the exercise of a powerful influence over all civilized nations, have been the objects most dear to the heart of Catholic France.

Clovis looked upon himself as the heir of the Western Empire; and he and his successors tried to introduce, or to retain at their court and in their kingdom, as

much of the forms of Roman administration as they could. They sternly held the barrier of the Rhine against the vast hordes of barbarians, who were ever moving about in restless agitation behind its eastern bank. Within their territory Catholic unity reigned; and as time passed on, and their frontier advanced, Aquitaine, Burgundy, Provence, and at a later period Friesland, Swabia, Thuringia, Hesse, and finally Saxony, being conquered by them, each province as it fell under their rule was brought into the fold of the Catholic Church. The words which S. Gregory addressed to Childebert, King of Austrasia, and son to the celebrated Brunehaut, were full of import, "It is a small thing," said he, "to be a king where others are kings; but it is much to be a Catholic where others do not share this honor⁴." France has always been conscious of this honor. Clovis declared to his assembled leudes, that it was an insupportable sorrow to him that the Arians possessed the half of Gaul. Dagobert called on a band of Slave ravagers to respect the servants of God. And even though one may question the disinterestedness of Clovis, or may acquiesce in the Slave king's retort, "If you are the servants of God, we are the dogs of God, who bite the legs of His wicked servants," yet the mere announcement of a religious motive by a barbarian chief, was a proof that conscience was awaking, and that higher prizes than land, or gold, or captives, were henceforth to be fought for by

⁴ S. Greg. Ep. vi. ad Childebert II. Montalembert, Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. v. p. 142.

brave warriors. Thus was first struck that grand keynote, which resounded through the middle ages, and found its noblest expression in the Crusades.

But though the Merovingian kings and their personal followers became Christians, they did not cease to be barbarians. Their lives were a constant struggle between two contrary principles, and thus they furnish a curious chapter in the history of the human race. On the one hand are found cold-blooded murders, even of their nearest relatives, relentless cruelty and revenge, polygamy and unrestrained sensuality, with every passionate excess that would naturally spring from savage ferocity and barbarian pride. But, on the other hand, there are fine acts of simple faith and humility, a remarkable appreciation of supernatural virtue, and a strong sense of God's presence and retributive justice, which often served as a check to their wildest bursts of passion.

In dealing with them the Church began her work where Rome had turned aside, and had consequently failed. She cared not for order, or intellectual culture, or civilization, except in so far as they promoted her own special ends. Immortal souls were all that she thought of; and to save them she made efforts which surpassed even those by which Rome conquered the world. But in saving souls, she saved all else^a that was worth saving out of the wreck of ancient civilization. It was no easy task to curb the proud independence of these barbarians, to teach them their

^a Ozanam, *Les Germains*, c. vii. p. 381.

own spiritual helplessness, and to lead them to prefer humility, gentleness, mercy, and forgiveness of injuries, rather than the blood-thirstiness, revenge, and fearless reliance on their own physical strength, which they and their forefathers for long ages had deemed the highest virtues. And the task was the harder, because the converts lived in the midst of the strongest temptations, from the disordered state of society and the Pagan atmosphere which surrounded them.

This was the opening of that struggle between physical and spiritual force, which forms the history of Europe during the next thousand years; and the Church's work must be estimated, not by its immediate results, but by the way in which it was carried on, and the objects to which it was directed. The Merovingians were like self-willed, passionate, and impulsive children, full of great faults and noble instincts; and the Church treated them like children, reproving, encouraging, making excuses for them by turns, and above all laboring to inspire them with Christian motives and principles. Thus she never wearied of reminding their kings, that if they would excel by their deeds as well as their faith, they must be merciful to their subjects, restraining their power, so as to act according to right rather than might⁶; not allowing anger to overmaster them, but governing with the affection of a father, and not with the harsh-

⁶ S. Greg. Ep. vi. ad Childebert II. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. v. p. 142.

ness of a tyrant⁷; administering justice according to the laws rather than the king's will⁸; and in their conduct substituting the pure morality enjoined by God's law for the drunkenness, voluptuous songs, and immodest dances of their Pagan ancestors; in all which things, she told them, the power of kings ought to support the authority of the Church⁹.

Though the ferocious and profligate acts of the Merovingians unhappily take a more prominent place in history than their good impulses, or the struggles between their passions and their conscience, yet enough is recorded to show how the Church was gradually leavening the mass of barbarism with Christian feeling and thought. What can be more touching than to watch Clovis, the barbarian chief, still wearing his white robe of baptism, and listening with riveted attention to S. Remi, as he tells him the story of the Crucifixion, till, unable longer to restrain himself, he starts to his feet, grasps his spear, and cries aloud, "Would that I had been there with my brave Franks! I would have avenged His wrongs¹." By his side appears his sister Albofleda, who was baptized on the same day as himself. Touched by the same tale of Divine love, she devotes herself to Jesus by a vow of virginity, renouncing the world with its honors and

⁷ "Exhortatio ad Francorum Regem Clovis II.," MS. in Vatican. Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét.* c. iii. p. 71.

⁸ Canons of Council of Paris, A.D. 614. Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét.* c. iii. p. 69.

⁹ *Epistolæ Childeberti I.* Ozanam, *Civil. Chrét.* c. iii. p. 68.

¹ *Fredegar. Epitom.* t. ii. c. xxi. p. 400. Gibbon, c. xxxviii.

pleasures; thus early setting a noble example to the thousands of nuns, who in every age have been the glory of France.

Then there is Fredegonde, odious alike by her cruelty, her avarice, and her licentiousness. Arrested in her career of vice and crime by the dangerous illness of two of her sons, she is struck with compunction and remorse, and going to her husband Chilperic I., aptly styled the Nero of the North, she says to him, "God has long borne with our sins. He has often chastised us with fevers and other maladies, but we have not amended our lives. Now we are about to lose our children; and they are being killed by the tears of the poor, the wailing of the widows, and the groans of the orphans. We amass treasures, and we know not who will inherit them. Come, let us burn all the edicts by which we have laid oppressive taxes on our people." Then, striking her breast, she sends for the registers of the taxes which she has laid on her own towns; and as she throws them into the fire, she says to her husband, "Why do you hesitate? Do what you see me do, in order that if we lose our children, we may at least escape eternal punishment." Then Chilperic sent for his edicts and registers of taxation, and threw them into the fire. Notwithstanding, the two young princes died; but, softened for a time by the grace of God, Chilperic and Fredegonde distributed alms liberally among the poor and the churches².

Again, there is the ferocious Clotaire, the pitiless

² Greg. Tur. l. v. c. xxxv. Rohrbacher, t. ix. l. xlv. p. 299.

murderer of his two infant nephews, and of his own son and grandchildren, whom he cruelly condemned to be burnt. His licentiousness equalled his cruelty; for he asserted the royal privilege of polygamy claimed by his Pagan ancestors, and had no less than six wives and an innumerable host of concubines. He had sought eagerly to obtain possession of Consortia, a Provençal heiress of great wealth and beauty; but when she came to him as an orphan, and told him that she had vowed her virginity and her possessions to God, he at once gave her permission to keep her vow, and granted her his protection against all who should molest her³. He also allowed his favourite queen, S. Radegunda, to separate from him in order to lead a religious life. After some time his love for her got the better of him, and he set out to force her to return to him; hearing, however, on the way that she had taken refuge at the tomb of S. Hilary at Poitiers, he did not dare to violate the sanctuary, but overcome by religious feelings, gave her the means to build a cloister for herself at Poitiers. Some years after, being at Tours, the close vicinity to his favourite queen once more awakes his passion for her, and he is about to go and tear her from the cloister; but he is met at the tomb of S. Martin by S. Germain, Bishop of Paris, who, on his knees and with tears, entreats him to desist. Touched by supernatural grace, the passionate barbarian raises the saintly bishop, and prostrating him-

³ Vit. S. Consortiæ, cc. xii. xiv. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 237.

self at his feet, confesses that he deserves not to have for his queen one who had always preferred God's will to his, and begs her pardon for his wicked intentions; then, humbled and contrite, he retraces his steps and leaves her in peace⁴. The last words of this fierce barbarian graphically express the struggle between habitual pride and simple faith. As he lay on his death-bed, he was freed from the excommunication which his wicked life had drawn down upon him; and as he was about to expire, he said to his courtiers, "What think you must be the power of that King of Heaven, who can thus cause such a powerful king to die?"

It is also interesting to see how those proud Franks bore the reproofs of courageous bishops and monks. S. Nizier was in the constant habit of reproving Thierry I., Clovis's eldest son, for his dissolute life; notwithstanding, when the see of Treves fell vacant, Thierry appointed S. Nizier to fill it, and sent some of his nobles to fetch him from his monastery. On their way back to the court the party halted at a village, when the nobles, with their habitual lawlessness, turned their horses loose into the corn-fields. Then the abbot indignantly exclaimed, "Take your horses instantly out of the harvest of the poor, or I will excommunicate you." "What!" cried the enraged Franks, "you are not yet a bishop, and already you

⁴ Vit. S. Radegund. l. ii. cc. vi. vii. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 310. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii.

⁵ Greg. Tur. l. iv. n. 21. Rohrbacher, t. ix. l. xlv. p. 255.

threaten excommunication.” “It is the king,” replied the abbot, “who tears me from my monastery to make me a bishop. God’s will be done; but as to the king’s will, when he wills what is wrong, it shall never be done if I can prevent it.” And forthwith he set to work himself to drive the horses out of the standing corn. He never ceased to reprove Thierry and his son Theodobert for their licentious lives, being wont to say, “I am prepared to die for justice.” He was at last banished by Clotaire I., whom he had excommunicated; but on his journey to a foreign land, the news of Clotaire’s death recalled him⁶.

Childebert I., King of Paris, brother to Thierry and Clotaire, was the most humane of the sons of Clovis, though he was not guiltless of the blood of his own family; for it was he who excited his brother Clotaire to murder their two infant nephews. But, when one of these innocent children ran to him for protection, he tried, though in vain, to induce the infuriated Clotaire to spare him. This was the great blot in his life, but otherwise he seems to have been humane and pious. He always treated the clergy and monks with great respect, and was very liberal in his donations for the foundation of churches and religious houses. When he was about to march into Spain against the Visigoths, A.D. 542, he happened to pass by the cell of the monk Eusitius, at Selles, in Berry. Pausing at the door, he offered fifty gold pieces to the holy man. “What am

⁶ Greg. Tur. *De Vitis Patrum*, c. xvii. *Moines d’Occident*, t. ii. l. vii.

I to do with them?" asked the old hermit. "I have enough to do in praying to God for my sins. However, march on, you will conquer; and then you can do what you will." Childebert bent his head to receive the hermit's blessing, promising, if his prediction was fulfilled, to build him a church on his return. In Spain he carried all before him, and at last laid siege to Saragossa. The inhabitants driven to extremity, placed their last hope in S. Vincent the Martyr, who was the patron of the town. They fasted for some days, and then, clothed in sackcloth they bore the tunic of the saint in solemn procession round the walls, the women following dressed in black, striking their breasts and wailing, as if they were attending the funeral of a husband. The besiegers, noticing the unusual stir, contrived to get hold of one of the citizens, and asked what it meant. On hearing that the besieged were imploring the mercy of God through the intercession of S. Vincent, whose tunic was being carried round the walls, the besiegers were panic struck, for they dared not fight against God and the saint. Childebert sent for the bishop, who came, bringing rich offerings to soften the king; but Childebert declined them, asking only for relics of S. Vincent. The bishop gave him the martyr's stole, retaining the tunic for the town, and the Franks forthwith raised the siege. On his return to Paris Childebert built a church in honor of S. Vincent, in which he deposited the stole and a quantity of the rich spoil that he had got in Spain, among which was a Cross of gold set with precious stones, for

which reason he built the church in the form of a cross⁷. Nor did he forget his promise to S. Eusitius; for he built him on the banks of the Cher a monastery and a church, in which the saintly hermit was buried⁸.

Another recipient of Childebert's bounty was S. Marculph, one of the first monks of Frank origin⁹. He was born of a rich and noble family of Bayeux; but from his childhood he cared for nought except the things of God. Resigning his worldly rank and wealth, he placed himself under S. Possessor, Bishop of Coutances, by whose direction he preached and made many converts in the Cotentin. At length, in obedience to a nocturnal vision, he mounted his ass, and set off to seek an interview with Childebert at Nantes. On his arrival he found the king in the midst of his leudes, celebrating a great festival. Shrinking from the noise and joviality of the scene, he retired to a corner to await a more fitting occasion for preferring his request. But his presence was quickly felt and revealed by some obsessed persons who were present, and who called aloud on him by name to spare them, and not to torment them. Amazed at this strange cry, Childebert

⁷ Rohrbacher, t. ix. l. xlv. p. 235. Greg. Tur. l. iii. c. xxix.

⁸ Greg. Tur. De Glor. Confess. c. lxxxii. The magnificent abbey church of Selles-sur-Cher was sacked, and the roof of the nave was destroyed by the Huguenot Coligny, A.D. 1562. Montalembert, Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii.

⁹ Montalembert says that the only Frank monk of earlier date than S. Marculph or Marcoul, A.D. 558, was Thierry, a disciple of S. Remi, and first abbot of the monastery near Rheims which bore his name. He died A.D. 555. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii.

ordered search to be made for this Marculph, the servant of Christ, who was so feared by the demons. Then Marculph presented himself, and Childebert received him joyfully, declaring himself honored by a visit from so holy a man. Whereupon Marculph answered, "Peace and mercy to thee, illustrious prince, from Jesus Christ. Though thou excellest others in dignity, and art seated on the royal throne, forget not that thou art mortal, and be not puffed up by pride, so as to despise thy equals. Remember the words of the wise man. 'The people have made thee a prince: exalt not thyself, but be as one of them among them'.¹ Therefore follow justice and mercy. Show justice to thy subjects, and temper thy justice with mercy." He proceeded to tell him who he was, and that he was come to ask of him a certain domain near Nantes, in order that it might no longer belong to an earthly master, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose service he proposed to build a monastery and establish a community of monks bound by a very severe rule. Childebert willingly granted his petition, and the Abbey of Nantes rose on the royal foundation which he bestowed².

Great as were the faults and crimes of these early Merovingians, two broad facts prove that the Church's lessons were not quite thrown away. One is, that whereas the Franks, as Pagans, had almost exterminated the inhabitants of the north-east of Gaul, yet when as

¹ Eccles. xxxii. 1.

² Vit. S. Marculf. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 120.

Christians they extended their conquests southward, they treated the Gallo-Roman population with comparative clemency, allowing them to retain their own laws and forms of government, demanding of them only a certain portion, and not the whole of the produce of the land, and asserting the pride of conquest only by assessing the life of a Frank at twice as much as that of a Gallo-Roman.

The other fact is, their bold profession of the Catholic faith in the midst of Pagans and heretics, the honor and respect with which they publicly treated bishops and monks as being God's servants, and the liberal donations by which they enabled them to carry on their missionary work. To them Europe is indebted for the very existence of Christianity; and the answer of S. Remi to those who were complaining to him of Clovis, may well be applied to them. "We should pardon much to one who has so widely spread the faith, and been the saviour of so many provinces."

CHAPTER II.

S. BENEDICT.

ABOUT the time that Clovis was baptized, there occurred in Italy an event not less pregnant with blessing to the Church. In the year 480 a child was born at Nursia, and baptized by the name of Benedictus, or "Blessed¹." His father, Eupropius, belonged to the Anician family, so celebrated for the Pagan heroes and Christian saints who sprang from it. His mother, Abundantia, was the sole heiress of the Lords of Nursia, the grand ruins of whose palace attested for centuries their wealth and magnificence.

At an early age Benedict was taken by his parents to Rome, to obtain the education befitting his rank; but shocked by the scenes of vice which met his eye, and fearing lest he should be drawn into the vortex of dissipation, he preferred ignorance to sin, and fled from temptation. He was still a mere child, and his nurse

¹ Vit. S. Benedict. S. Gregor. Magn. Dial. lib. ii. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. S. Gregory received the facts from the four monks who successively governed the Order after S. Benedict's death. Some local details in this and the next few chapters are borrowed from "Moines d'Occident," t. ii.

Cyrilla, who loved him tenderly, followed him. They wandered through the wild solitudes which then covered Italy, till they came to a village about fifty miles to the south-east of Rome and two from Subiaco, where a congregation of holy men lived in the Church of S. Peter. Here the nurse happened to borrow an earthen vessel for sifting corn, and having carelessly left it on the table, it was thrown down and broken. Not having the means to replace it, she began to cry bitterly; whereupon Benedict touched by her grief, took up the broken pieces, and kneeling down, prayed fervently over them, till at length he rose from his knees, and gave the vessel to his nurse, whole and without the least sign of fracture. This miracle was known to all around; and for many years the vessel hung in the church, as a token of Benedict's early sanctity.

Benedict, however, longed to suffer for God rather than to win applause through His favors; and, accordingly, when he was fourteen years of age, he contrived to elude his nurse's vigilance, and fly secretly to the rocky mountain range above Subiaco. On his way he met a monk called Rômanus, to whom he confided his secret, and who led him to an almost inaccessible cave, and promised to supply his wants. As there was no path from Romanus's monastery to the cave, he was in the habit of going to the rock which overhung it, and letting down a rope with a loaf and a bell tied to it, and on hearing the sound of the bell, Benedict would come out of the cave and take the loaf. But the devil, enraged at the monk's charity and the youth's asceticism,

one day threw a stone at the bell as it was being lowered, and broke it. Notwithstanding, Romanus continued to minister to the wants of the young hermit.

Nor was this the only annoyance that Benedict encountered from his ghostly enemy. Once the devil came in the form of a small black bird, flying so close round his face, that he could have caught it with his hand, and thus distracted him from his prayers, till he made the sign of the Cross, and the bird vanished. On another occasion the devil depicted on his imagination the form of a woman, and enticed by the delusion, he was about to quit his hermitage. But quickly recovering himself, he threw off his clothes, and rushing into a thicket of thorns and thistles that grew close by, he rolled in them till his whole body was covered with wounds, thus curing the interior sore by exterior ones. In reward for his courage, the devil was never after permitted to assail him with this kind of temptation.

Thus Benedict lived for three years in absolute solitude, devoted to the conquest of his human infirmities and the contemplation of God. At length, it came to pass one Easter day, that a priest who dwelt at some distance, was about to enjoy a good meal suited to the festival, when our Lord stood before him, and said, "Thou preparest luxuries for thyself, while My servant is tortured by hunger." The priest instantly rose from table, and set off for the place to which he was directed, carrying with him the food which had been prepared for himself; and after crossing steep hills, deep valleys, and tangled wilds, he stood at the

entrance of Benedict's cave. In eremitic fashion, they first knelt down to pray, after which they sat down, when the priest told Benedict what had befallen him, adding, "Come, let us eat, for it is a great feast." Benedict answered, "It is indeed a feast, because I have been deemed worthy to see thee." For he had been so long shut out from all human intercourse that he knew not that it was Easter. But the priest replied, "Truly this is the festival of our Lord's resurrection, and therefore it befits thee not to abstain." Then giving thanks to God they began to eat: and when they had finished, the priest returned to his church.

About the same time some shepherds wandered to the cave, and spying through the thicket Benedict covered with skins, they at first took him for a wild beast. But when they found out who he was and what manner of life he led, many of them were converted. From this time his reputation spread around, and great numbers of persons came to see him, bringing him refreshment for his body, in return for which they received from his lips the food of eternal life.

At Vicovaro, which was at no great distance from Benedict's cave, there was a monastery, the abbot of which happening to die, the monks besought him to come and govern them. He long refused, but at last overcome by their entreaties, he consented. Soon the monks began to rue their choice, for he introduced regular discipline into the monastery, and would not allow the least infraction of the rule. In vain did the

monks complain and bewail their own folly in having chosen an abbot with such high notions of virtue; till at length, unable any longer to tolerate him, they conspired to get rid of him by putting poison in the wine that he would drink. As he sat at table the glass cup of wine was handed to him; but when, in monastic fashion, he made the sign of the Cross over it, it broke to pieces as if it had been struck by a stone. Then he knew that it must have contained a deadly poison, since it could not bear the sign of life. Rising with a placid countenance and a tranquil heart, he said to the assembled monks, "Almighty God have mercy on you, brethren. Wherefore would you treat me thus? Did I not tell you beforehand that your ways and mine would not agree? Go, and choose a father according to your own habits of life; for after this you cannot have me for your father." Then retiring to his solitary cave, he dwelt alone in peace and joy, absorbed in heavenly contemplation.

Gradually Benedict's name became known far beyond his own neighborhood, and crowds of persons of all classes flocked to him. Roman patricians brought their delicate sons to be trained by him in the paths of virtue; proud, blood-stained barbarians came to learn humility and gentleness; the broken-hearted, from whom the hand of the spoiler had torn all that made this world dear, came to win treasures for the world to come; the sated conqueror sought for repose from the wild turmoils of that terrible period; the oppressed looked for liberty and peace. Nobles and slaves,

soldiers and peasants, Romans and barbarians, conquerors and conquered, all gathered round him, and all were received on a footing of perfect equality.

In that promiscuous crowd of ardent spirits there were many saints, the most celebrated of whom were two young patricians, Maurus and Placidus, who were brought to Benedict by their fathers, A.D. 522. Maurus was then only twelve years of age, but being a youth of precocious talent, he soon became very useful to his master; and twenty years later, A.D. 542, he was selected to carry the Benedictine rule to France. Placidus, on the contrary, was only seven, and long retained his childish simplicity; but he won, after long tortures, the higher honor of martyrdom in Sicily, A.D. 541.

The river Anio, in its course through the wild created by invading hosts, formed a basin enclosed between two high walls of rock, and thence fell in successive cascades down to the village of Subiaco. On these grand and picturesque heights Benedict built twelve monasteries for his sons, each surrounded by a plot of land, which they reclaimed and tilled. Over each he placed an abbot, while he himself was the common father of all. Three of the monasteries were built on an abrupt mountain peak; and there being no water near them, the monks found it both laborious and dangerous to go constantly down the steep declivity to fetch water from the lake. They therefore went to Benedict and told him that it would be necessary to remove the monasteries to some more

convenient spot. But he only tried to encourage them, and dismissed them without granting their request. The following night he went out secretly, accompanied by the child Placidus alone; and ascending the rocky peak, he knelt down to pray. After he had long prayed, he marked the spot with three stones, and returned to his own monastery. The next morning the monks came again to speak about the want of water; whereupon he said to them, "Go and excavate the rock on which you find three stones placed. Almighty God can give you water even on the summit of that mountain." The monks obeyed, and toiling up the steep, found the spot with three stones laid on it; and scarcely had they hollowed the surface of the rock, than water flowed into the cavity in such abundance, that it was more than sufficient for all their wants.

There was in the community a Goth, who was remarkable for his spirit of poverty. It happened one day that he was given a sickle, and told to go and clear away some brambles which grew on the edge of the lake. As he was hewing the brambles with all his might, the iron hook of the sickle slipped off the handle and fell into the lake; and the water being deep, there was no hope of recovering it. Then the Goth trembling, went to Maurus, and confessing what had happened, began to do penance for his fault. Maurus quickly communicated the occurrence to Benedict, who going down to the lake, took the handle of the sickle from the Goth and put it into the water; whereupon the iron hook rose from the bottom and

attached itself to the handle. Then Benedict restored the sickle to the Goth, saying, "There, work, and be not sorrowful."

One day it came to pass that the boy Placidus went down to the lake to draw water, and leaning carelessly over the bank, fell in and was carried away swiftly by the current. Benedict, who was in his cell, knew by intuition what had occurred, and calling Maurus in haste, said, "Run, brother Maurus, for that boy who went to draw water, has fallen into the lake, and the current has already carried him far away." Then Maurus, after receiving the father's blessing, rushed down to the lake, and thinking only of obeying, without noticing whether or not he was still on dry land, ran over the water, and catching the boy by the hair, drew him to the shore. But no sooner did his foot again touch the land, than looking behind him, he was amazed to see what he had done. He forthwith went to Benedict and related to him what had happened. But Benedict disclaimed all share in the miracle, and attributed it to the merit of Maurus's obedience; while Maurus denied that he could have had any merit in what he had done unconsciously. Placidus was called in as arbiter in this contest of saintly humility; and he said, "When I was being dragged out of the water, I saw the abbot's cowl over my head, and I believe it was he who saved me."

In one of the monasteries there was a monk who could not be induced to pray; but as soon as the brethren assembled for prayer, he would wander out

into the country, occupying himself with desultory thoughts. In vain did the abbot reprove him, and even take him to Benedict to be scolded. On his return home he would do better for a couple of days, but on the third day he would resume his wanderings at the hour of prayer. When Benedict heard this he said, "I will come and reform him myself." He accordingly went to the monastery to which the monk belonged, and he saw that as soon as the psalmody was finished and the brethren were about to pray, this monk was leaving the oratory. He said privately to the abbot and Maurus, "Do you not see what it is that is dragging him out?" And when they answered that they could not see, he bade them pray that they might do so. Then after they had prayed for two days, Maurus saw, though the abbot did not, that the devil in the form of a black boy, had got hold of the monk's habit and was dragging him out. Accordingly, the next day Benedict went out of the oratory as soon as the hour of prayer was over, and seeing the monk standing outside, he gave him a good beating. And from this day the monk remained immovable at prayer, and was no longer drawn away by the black boy; for the devil feared to molest him with wandering thoughts, as if it was he who had been beaten.

So great a work for God's glory could not long proceed without exciting opposition. The priest of a church in the neighborhood was filled with envy by the sight of virtues which he did not care to emulate; and at length he sent Benedict a poisoned loaf as a

gift, which Benedict received with thanks, though he knew it was poisoned. It happened that daily at the dinner hour, a crow was in the habit of coming to be fed from Benedict's hand; and when it came on this day as usual, he said to it, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, take that loaf and carry it where no man can find it." The crow opened its mouth, flying round the loaf and cawing, as much as to say, that it wished to obey, but could not do so. Then Benedict repeated the command; whereupon the crow took up the loaf and flew away; and it was not till after the lapse of three hours that it returned for its accustomed alms.

The priest, finding that his diabolical plot had failed, had recourse to another even yet more wicked. For he sent seven abandoned women to the fields where the monks were at work, hoping to pollute their minds by the immodest dress and gestures of these wretched beings. Benedict had hitherto been indifferent to the priest's enmity, and had only grieved over his hardness of heart; but now he was alarmed for the virtue of his sons; and knowing that the priest's enmity was directed against himself alone, he determined to remove elsewhere. He therefore gathered all his children round him, placed abbots over each of the monasteries, gave them directions for their future conduct, and then departed with a few chosen disciples.

Great was the exultation of the priest at finding that he had driven Benedict away. But his triumph was of short duration; for almost at the same time a balcony, in which he sat rejoicing, gave way and fell to

the ground, burying him in the ruins. Maurus at once set out with the news to Benedict, and finding him scarcely ten miles off, said to him, "Return, for the priest who persecuted thee is dead." On hearing this Benedict broke out into loud lamentations, both for the death of his enemy, and because his disciple was rejoiced at his death; and he gave Maurus a penance for his presumption.

But though the priest was dead, Benedict, who had seen in his enmity only an indication of God's will, did not return to Subiaco, but continued his journey southward along the ridge of the Abruzzi till he came to the Terra di Lavoro. There, on the side of a steep mountain, which rose abruptly in solitary grandeur, its summit piercing into the clouds, he found a ruined amphitheatre, where stood an old temple dedicated to Apollo, in which Pagan rites were still performed. The situation was well suited to his purpose, and he fixed on it for the home of his little community, A.D. 529. His first care was to preach to the Pagan population, and persuade them to cut down the grove, demolish the temple, and burn the idols. On the site of the temple he built a chapel dedicated to S. Martin; and on the spot where the altar of Apollo had stood, he erected a chapel to S. John Baptist. Round these two chapels gradually rose the monastery of Monte Cassino, the cradle of the Benedictine order, whence for many centuries religion and learning flowed over Europe.

At Monte Cassino Benedict spent the remaining years of his life. Crowds of disciples of all ranks and

nations flocked to him, as at Subiaco, and even in greater numbers.

For them he wrote out a rule which is remarkable as being the first which was written specially for the West²; for hitherto the Western monks had adopted portions of the discipline of the Egyptian deserts, or of S. Basil's rule for the East; each following the practices which accorded with his own devotion. Thus individuals sanctified themselves; but there being no organization or united action, the monks, as a body, were not equal to the great work of Christianizing and civilizing the modern world. S. Benedict's rule supplied these deficiencies, and thus fitted the monks for the task which God's Providence had assigned them.

The distinctive characteristics of S. Benedict's rule are its gentle, loving spirit, the minuteness of detail which regulates each practice of monastic life, and the perfect organization which blends together the best points of both the Roman and the German national systems.

In the prologue³ the monks are lovingly invited, as "well beloved sons," to listen to the "sweet voice of their

² The honor of introducing monastic life into the West is generally given to S. Athanasius, who brought thither the rule of S. Antony, A.D. 340. A monastery seems, however, to have existed at Milan previous to A.D. 313; and there was one in an island at the confluence of the Aar and the Rhone as early as the reign of the Emperor Severus. *Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. Præf. cc. xvii. xix.*

³ *Prologus Regulæ, Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. iv.* The following observations on the Benedictine rule are based in great measure on the analysis of it in the same chapter, from which the quotations from it are also taken.

Lord who entreats them," and "with paternal love shows them the way of life;" so that "after He has deigned to reckon them among His sons," they may obey Him "by the help of His benefits," and "never grieve Him by their evil actions."

The free spirit which naturally accompanies a loving self-oblation, was not however allowed to interfere with the strictness of discipline, or the perfect practice of obedience and poverty. The details of daily life, the occupation of each hour, the amount of manual labor, of study, and of prayer, and every possible contingency, were legislated for; and a regular government and vigilant supervision were provided. The abbot, elected for life, exercised despotic authority, limited only by the written rule; and under him was a complete gradation of officials superintending the daily actions and work of each of the brethren. Obedience to all these constituted authorities was to be calm, prompt, and zealous; nor was it enough for a monk to obey his superiors, he must also obey his equals and juniors.

Within the monastery no distinctions of birth or worldly rank, and no private property were known. Prince and slave, rich and poor, barbarian and Roman, all were brothers of one family, all slept in a common dormitory, all wore the same dress, which was that then used by laborers and shepherds; all ate at one table of the same food, which was limited to two cooked dishes and one uncooked dish of vegetables, a pound of bread, and a small measure of wine, meat

being allowed to the sick and feeble. Gifts or alms received by a monk belonged to the community. Even a man's natural talents were not his own; for he who excelled in any art or science, was to use his powers only with the permission of his superior; and if he were proud of them, he was to be put to some other work till he should be humbled.

The penitential discipline, the fasting, and the silence were less severe than in the earlier orders; but the organized "*labor obedientiæ*," pervading every act and every minute, curbed as effectually, though more gently, those passions and that self-will, the complete destruction of which is the object of monastic life. It also served as a salutary restraint on over-excitement, and a stimulus to langour, in the unavoidable fluctuations of religious fervor.

This discipline of obedience was evidently borrowed from the Roman camp and court; but the rule had two points which recommended it to the free German.

One of these was its communistic character, which closely resembled the social and family relations of German life. Not only was there perfect equality and common property among the monks, but all affairs of importance were referred to the full chapter, each monk, beginning with the youngest, giving his opinion. The choice of the abbot, of his counsellors, and of the other monastic officers, belonged to the whole body; and on no occasion whatsoever could the abbot come to a decision, or act on his own responsibility, without consulting his brethren. He stood in the place

of Christ, as the father of the family and the good shepherd; and he was enjoined not only to rule the monks as a lord, but to heal their wounds, to support them, to bear with their various characters, to be the servant of all, and to obey all, while all obeyed him. The monks, too, were brethren, each, in charity, bending his will to that of the others, and doing every thing with moderation out of regard to the younger brethren.

The other point of recommendation was the voluntary character of the monk's obedience, thus recalling the idea of that personal devotion by which the German bound himself to a favourite hero. When a man applied for admission to the cloister, he was allowed to remain for several days before the closed gate; after which time, if he persevered, he was taken to the guest chamber, where he was detained some days longer before he was admitted to the novitiate. After two months' trial, the rule was read to him, and its difficulties were pointed out. This was repeated three times during his novitiate, it being each time said to him, "This is the rule under which thou wishest to fight. If thou canst observe it, enter; if thou canst not, depart free." At the end of the year he was reminded, that "from that day forth he would no longer have any power over his own body;" and on his still expressing his wish to be a monk, he was allowed to take the vow of "stability," by which he was bound, not merely to the general practice of perfection, where and as he chose, but to the service of a certain monastery, to which his remaining years were to be given. This vow,

which Benedict was the first to introduce, gave a more definite form to the monastic life, and greatly increased the practical usefulness of the monks. But even after this solemn, public profession, no physical restraint was used to detain a monk against his will; and the clothes which he had worn when he entered the cloister, were kept for him, in case he should ever wish to resume them. That this was no empty form, is evident from the fact, that from time to time were to be seen unhappy men, who, despite the censures of the Church, had thrown off their vows and quitted the cloister, often wandering from place to place in idleness and profligacy.

In two other points S. Benedict's rule differed from those that had preceded it. These were the obligations to manual labor and to study. In all previous ages manual labor had been considered derogatory to rank and wealth, and fitted only for slaves and persons of low position. Even the Germans, as they wandered south, gave up the agricultural life of their ancestors, and left the culture of their lands to serfs and captive slaves. But the obligation to manual labor imposed on the Benedictine monks, gradually brought about a mighty revolution in society, restoring to labor the honor which was morally due to it, and thus bringing society back into harmony with the natural law, by which God has imposed labor, in one form or another, on all the children of Adam.

The obligation to study was scarcely less important. Every monastery had its school, in which every monk

on entering the novitiate, was taught to read if he could not already do so, and trained to classical and patristic studies if he showed any taste or talent for learning. Not only did the daily obligation to read for two hours result in the revival of learning by the celebrated monkish scholars, but it had a more widely beneficial influence by leavening the whole society with Christian and educated thought. For as the monks were very numerous, and were taken from every class, and were, moreover, constantly brought into close relations with persons of all ranks, it is evident that they must have unconsciously diffused around them educated ideas, which, working in the mass of barbarism and ignorance into which they were thrown, slowly and imperceptibly softened and enlightened it. Even at the present day, the difference in average intelligence between populations, however rude and simple, who are in contact with monks and nuns, and the unhappy heathen poor of large English towns, is very striking. How much greater, then, must have been the influence of educated monastic orders, when the other helps to education which now exist, were totally wanting.

According to this rule Benedict trained his monks at Monte Cassino. Though he never was raised to the priesthood, yet he ruled all around him like a patriarch. One of the means by which he maintained his power, was the supernatural gift by which he could read the thoughts of others and know the acts of the absent. Some of the brethren having broken the rule by eating while they were making the usual round in

search of food, were greeted on their return by Benedict with the inquiry, "Where did you eat?" And when they denied that they had eaten, he told them all particulars of place and time, and the quality of the food of which they had partaken.

Again, one of the monks whose father filled a high public office, happened to be appointed to hold a light to the abbot as he ate. As the young man stood before the table with the light, proud thoughts took possession of his heart, and he said to himself, "Who is this man that I should wait on him while he eats, holding a light and being his servant? And who am I that I should serve him?" Then Benedict turning to him, began to reprove him sharply, saying, "Make the sign of the cross on thy heart, brother. What is that thou art saying? Make the sign of the cross on thy heart." Calling some other monks, he bade them take the light, and dismissing the proud one, ordered him to go to his cell. And when the monks asked the offender what he had been doing to incur the abbot's displeasure, he confessed to them the proud thoughts that had been passing through his mind, and what he had been saying to himself. Whereupon they all saw that they could hide nothing from Benedict, since even the words that passed unspoken through their minds, sounded in his ears.

The gift of prophecy also was granted him. In the year 538, the whole of Italy was afflicted by a grievous famine. There was such a scarcity of all sorts of food in Campania, that the flour in the monastery was

exhausted, and at the dinner hour no more than five loaves could be had for all the brethren. Benedict, seeing that they were greatly cast down, said to them, "Why are you troubled by the want of bread? To-day indeed there is very little; but to-morrow there will be abundance." His words were verified the next day, when two hundred measures of flour in sacks were found before the gate of the monastery; but who had placed them there, was never known.

There was a man of noble birth and great virtue, called Theoprobis, who had been converted by Benedict, and enjoyed his confidence. He happened one day to enter Benedict's cell, and found him weeping bitterly. As he continued weeping for a long time, and it was evident that his tears did not flow from devotion, but from sorrow, Theoprobis at length inquired what it was that grieved him. Then the saint answered, "This monastery that I have built, and all that the brethren have created by their labor, will be given to the barbarians by the judgment of Almighty God. Scarcely could I obtain the favor that the lives of all in this place should be granted to me." This prophecy was fulfilled about A.D. 580, during the pontificate of Pelagius II., when the Lombards destroyed the monastery of Monte Cassino, the monks, however, escaping with their lives, as S. Benedict had foretold. The Pope gave them the Church of the Lateran in Rome, where they remained till about A.D. 720, when S. Petronax, at the command of S. Gregory II., restored the old house at Monte Cassino.

But even a higher gift than that of prophecy was granted to Benedict. One day when he was out working in the fields with the other monks, a peasant wild with grief, carrying his dead son in his arms, came to the monastery and asked for Benedict. Hearing where he was, he laid down his son's body at the gate, and set out to find Benedict, whom he met returning to the monastery with the other monks. As soon as the poor man saw him, he began to cry out, "Restore me my son, restore me my son." On hearing his words, Benedict stopped and said, "How have I taken away your son?" To which the other replied, "He is dead. Come, and raise him from the dead." But Benedict, greatly troubled, said, "Go away, brother, go away. Such power belongs not to us, but only to the Apostles. Why would you lay this task on us who cannot perform it?" Still the poor man persisted in his petition, vowing that he would not go away unless his son were raised from the dead. At length Benedict asked where his son was; and hearing that he lay at the gate of the monastery, he went with the brethren to the spot. Then kneeling down, and prostrating himself on the body of the child, he raised his hands to heaven, saying, "Lord, look not upon my sins, but upon the faith of this man, who prays to have his son raised from the dead. Graciously restore to this body the soul which Thou hast taken away." Scarcely had he uttered these words than the corpse began to tremble; as if agitated by some wonderful operation, and Benedict, taking the child's hand, restored him alive and well to his father.

Benedict's great sanctity seemed to give him a mysterious power over all who approached him. In the year 541, Totila, King of the Ostrogoths, invaded Italy, destroying the towns and practising great cruelties. There was in his army a Goth, called Galla, who, like the rest of his nation, was an Arian, and encouraged Totila in his atrocities against the Catholics. This man one day got hold of a peasant, whom he tortured cruelly in order to extract from him any treasure that he had hid. The poor man, hoping to be released from torture, cried out in his agony, that he had given all he possessed to Benedict, the servant of God. Galla therefore ordered him to take him to this Benedict, and tying his hands behind his back, drove him before his horse. Thus they reached the monastery, at the door of which sat Benedict reading. "There," said the peasant, "is Father Benedict, of whom I spoke." Instantly the Goth cried out savagely, "Get up, get up, and give me this man's goods, which thou hast received." At these words the saint looked up calmly from his book. But no sooner did his eye rest on the peasant than the bonds fell from his arms, and he stood up erect and free; at which sight, Galla, struck with awe and fear, threw himself down before the saint, and touching his feet with his forehead, besought him to pray for him. Then Benedict, without rising from his reading, called the brothers, and bade them take the Goth into the monastery and give him some blessed food⁴; and when

⁴ Besides the bread and wine used for consecration at Mass, the faithful made offerings of both, which were blessed by the bishop or

he had recovered himself, he reproved him for his ferocious cruelty. Then he dismissed him, and the barbarian went away humbled and contrite, not daring to make any further demands on the peasant, and vanquished by a single glance from that saintly eye.

Benedict's fame reached Totila, who wishing to see the saint and test his spiritual power, stopped at some little distance from Monte Cassino and sent on to announce his visit. Benedict returned an invitation to him to come; whereupon he dressed up Riggo, his sword-bearer, in his royal robes, and sent him to Benedict, accompanied by three of his chief personal attendants, who were to treat him with the ceremonial and deference due to royalty. But as soon as they came within hearing of the spot where Benedict was sitting, he cried out, "My son, take off what thou wearest, for it is not thine." Whereupon Riggo and his companions, trembling at their own presumption in trying to deceive the saint, returned to the king, and told him how quickly they had been detected.

Totila himself then went to Benedict, and when afar off he caught sight of the saint, he fell on his face, not daring to approach him. Thrice Benedict bade him arise; but he had not courage to do so, till the saint took him by the hand and raised him, at the same time reproving him for his wickedness, and telling him in a few words what would hereafter befall him. "Thou

priest after Mass, and distributed to those who were present, the surplus being reserved for the use of the clergy or monks, and for alms to the poor. *Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. iii. t. i. Præf. c. liii.*

committest many sins ; thou hast committed many sins ; refrain henceforth from iniquity. Thou shalt indeed enter Rome ; thou shalt cross the sea ; thou shalt reign nine years, and in the tenth year thou shalt die." On hearing this Totila was terribly frightened, and after asking the saint's prayers he retired. But from this time he was less cruel than formerly. Benedict's prophecy was fulfilled. For Totila soon after entered Rome, after which he crossed into Sicily, and in the tenth year from that time, A.D. 552, he was killed in a battle fought against the Greeks under Narses.

Nearly fifty years had now elapsed since Benedict had fled into the desert to preserve his innocence. He was above sixty years old, and his life was drawing to its close. He had a twin-sister called Scholastica. She was his sister by grace as well as nature ; for she had been dedicated to God from her childhood, and she was now leading a holy life under her brother's direction, in a monastery not far from his⁵. She was in the habit of coming once a year to see him, when, accompanied by a few monks, he would go out of the gate of the monastery, and spend the day with her. On 7th of February, A.D. 543, she came as usual, and Benedict went out to meet her. The day was spent in chanting God's praises and in holy conversation ; and as the sun declined they took their evening meal. Absorbed in sacred colloquy they sat long, and night

⁵ It is supposed that her monastery was that of Plumbariola, which stands in a valley quite close to Monte Cassino. It was afterwards rebuilt for the wife and daughter of a Lombard king, who became a monk of Monte Cassino. *Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. iv.

was closing in, when Scholastica said, "I beseech thee not to leave me, but talk with me till morning about the joys of heaven." But Benedict answered, "What art thou saying, my sister? I cannot on any account remain out of the monastery." Then Scholastica placed her hands on the table, and laying her head down on them, she began to pray to God with such fervor that her tears flowed in a stream on the table. When she bowed her head the sky was serene, and not a cloud was in sight; but as she raised it, the lightning flashed, thunder pealed, and torrents of rain poured down, so that it was impossible for Benedict and his monks to return to the monastery. Sorrowful at the thought of remaining out all night, he said, "Almighty God forgive thee, my sister! What hast thou done?" And she answered, "Behold, I asked thee, and thou wouldst not listen to me. I asked my Lord, and He has heard me. Go out now if thou canst, and return to thy monastery." Thus, he who would not remain of his own free will, was compelled to remain against his will; and they watched through the night, and satiated themselves with holy conversation. The next morning S. Scholastica and S. Benedict returned to their respective monasteries. Three days after, being the 10th of February, it came to pass that as Benedict was in his cell, raising his eyes to heaven he saw his sister's soul in the form of a white dove ascending to the mansions of the blessed. Rejoicing and thanking God, he announced her departure to the brethren. They sent to her convent for her body, and bringing it to Monte

Cassino, they placed it in the tomb in the chapel of S. John Baptist, which Benedict had prepared for himself.

Nor did the tomb long remain unfilled. In conversation with some of his sons, and in writing to others, he foretold that his death would take place on the 21st of March; and six days before that date he ordered his grave to be opened. Soon after he was attacked with fever, which from day to day became more violent. On the sixth day he was carried, at his own desire, to the church, where he received the holy Viaticum; after which, supported in the arms of his sons, he raised his hands to heaven, and while still breathing acts of love and prayer he expired.

Two of his disciples in different places, one being in the monastery and the other, S. Maurus, being in France, saw in vision innumerable stars forming a bright path of light going towards the East, and reaching from the monastery up to heaven. Then a man clothed in light, who stood by, asked them whose path it was that they beheld; and when they answered that they knew not, he said to them, "This is the path by which Benedict, the beloved of the Lord, has ascended to heaven⁶."

The monks laid S. Benedict by the side of S. Scholastica in the Chapel of S. John Baptist, which he built on the spot where the altar of Apollo had

⁶ There have been disputes about the date of S. Benedict's death, about the extension of his rule to women by S. Scholastica, and about its introduction by S. Gregory into his monasteries. In all these points the writer has followed *Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. Præf. cc. xxxii. xxxix. xlviii. lxxxi. xciv.*

stood. Their tomb is still to be seen under the high altar of the Church of Monte Cassino with the inscription, "Benedictum et Scholasticam uno in terris partu editos, una in Deum pietati cœlo redditos, unus hic excipit tumulus, mortalis depositi pro eternitate custos⁷."

Great as were S. Benedict's supernatural gifts, they were surpassed in marvellousness by the vast work of which he was the chosen instrument. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit may be seen in the perfect adaptation of his rule to the great work which it was destined to perform, and in his total unconsciousness of that destiny when he framed it. His only thought was to meet the wants of his own sons; and so little did he dream of any thing further, that he made no provision for the central government of the Order.

Within a century from his death his rule had taken root in Italy, France, England, Germany, and Spain⁸. It was confirmed by S. Gregory the Great at the Council of Rome, A.D. 595⁹, and again at another council of Rome, A.D. 610, by Boniface IV.¹, who then gave S. Benedict the title of "Monachorum Præceptor."

⁷ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. iv.

⁸ It was introduced into Spain A.D. 640. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. Præf. c. lxxiv.

⁹ Baronius, Annal. ad an. 595 ex MS. Sublacensi. Some doubt has been thrown on the authenticity of this MS.; but S. Gregory's confirmation is also proved by the seventh canon of the second Council of Donzy, near Sedan, A.D. 874, which says, "Eadem regula S. Spiritu promulgata et tandem auctoritate B. Papæ Gregorio inter canonicas scripturas et catholicorum doctorum scripta teneri decreta est." Ap. Moines d'Occident, ii. l. v. c. vi.

¹ Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. ii. Præf. c. i.

From it have branched, with few exceptions, all the modifications of religious life which have since spread through the world; and its history for a thousand years from its birth, is that of religion, learning, and civilization.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE SPRINGING OUT OF DECAY.

THE great law of nature by which life is developed from decay, was working in France in a remarkable way during the fifth and sixth centuries. Out of the calamities of that period a vigorous religious life was springing forth. The misery of the world was more than men could bear; and in very weariness they fled to solitude in search of repose and consolation through converse with God.

As early as A.D. 410, S. Honoratus founded on the rocky island of Lerins, a monastery, which became the retreat of learning and the bulwark of the faith. He opened the arms of his love to all who wished to love Christ, and men came to him from all parts of the world; so that there was no country or nation which did not send him disciples¹.

There was also the Abbey of S. Victor, founded at Marseilles by Cassian, where was practised the contemplative life, as he had witnessed it in Palestine and the

¹ Vit. S. Honorat. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i.

Thebaid; in which, and the houses attached to it, five thousand monks were soon collected. There was also the great Abbey of S. Germain at Auxerre; and, at no great distance, in Burgundy, that of Réôme, afterwards called Moutier S. Jean. Its founder was John, son of a senator of Dijon, who, at the age of twenty, retired to one of the deserts which the invasions had created. Disciples flocked to him; but alarmed at the honor in which his sanctity was held, he fled secretly to Lerins, where he remained hid as a novice for eighteen months, till he was recognized by one of his monks, who was in search of him. On his return to his own monastery he established regular discipline, and set his monks to clear away the forest and till the soil. One day their tools were stolen, whereupon he bade them study, while he went to look for the tools. Going out he knelt down to pray; and as he prayed a man ran to him, and, laying the tools at his feet, confessed that he had stolen them; when John not only pardoned him, but gave him an alms of blessed bread².

There were also at Arles two monasteries for men and women, founded, A.D. 508, by S. Cæsarius, who wrote a rule for both. In the monastery for women, over which his sister, Cæsaria, presided, two hundred nuns were collected, and the rule which he gave them was generally used throughout Gaul till the Benedictine rule displaced it. It required the nuns to study for two hours daily, to occupy themselves in copying MSS.,

² Vit. S. Joan. Reoman. auctore Monacho Reomanensi suppari. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 613.

and that one of them should read aloud while the rest worked. As to Auvergne, which suffered so terribly from the invasions of the Vandals and Visigoths, it seemed as if the whole population had taken refuge in religion, so that almost all the modern towns and villages owe their origin to monastic communities. But the most celebrated of all the monasteries of this period were Condat and Agaune.

In the year 425, Romanus³, a Gallo-Roman of Sequania, aged thirty-five, fled to the solitudes of the Jura, carrying with him only the history of the Fathers of the Desert, some seeds, and agricultural implements. Ensnconced on an almost inaccessible spot, shut in by three steep mountain peaks and dense thickets of trees and brushwood, with no shelter except a lofty pine, he set himself to read, to pray, and to sow his seeds in the arid soil, flattering himself that in so uninviting a spot he would be safe from intrusion. But soon his brother Lupicinus found him out; and after him flocked novices in such numbers, that an old monk complained they did not leave him even room to lie down. Thus the nook in which Romanus had hid himself, becoming too narrow to hold them all, they went forth like swarms of bees, and took possession of all the most secluded spots in Sequania and the neighboring provinces. Women, too, were attracted by the sanctity of the two brothers; and their sister, with one hundred and five nuns under her rule, placed herself on a neighboring rock overhanging a precipice, where now

³ Vit. S. Roman. Acta SS. Feb. 28.

stands a church, called S. Romain de Roche, in which S. Romanus is buried. In this monastery of Condat, now called S. Claude, buried in snow during the winter, and scorched in summer by the heat reflected from the rocks, clothed in skins so rudely sewed as to be scarcely a protection from the cold, with no other food than what they could procure by the labor of their hands in a soil unsuited for cultivation, the two brothers instituted a rule which vied in austerity with that of the Eastern deserts. From this mountain peak they ruled all the numerous communities which had gone forth from their hive, and exercised great influence over the Burgundian monarchs, the Allemanni and all the neighbouring tribes. True to monastic instincts, all the time that was not spent in prayer and agriculture, they devoted to letters and art. Condat became one of the most celebrated schools of Gaul, in which Greek, Latin, and eloquence were taught both to the monks and to seculars. Manuscripts also were copied; and the manufactures of box-wood, which are still to be found in the cottages of the Jura, may be traced back to these monks.

The Abbey of Agaune was founded a century later by S. Sigismund, the last of the Burgundian kings. It stands in the picturesque Alpine pass in the Valais, through which the Rhone rushes down to the Lake of Geneva⁴, on the spot where S. Maurice and the The-

⁴ Moines d'Occident, t. i. l. iii. Some writers say that this abbey had been founded two centuries earlier, or at least since A.D. 478, and that Sigismund only rebuilt and endowed it.

ban legion, to whom it was dedicated, were martyred. Its first inhabitants were a hundred monks from Condat, who brought to it the severe rule of their founder. But before long it contained no less than nine hundred monks, who, divided into nine choirs, kept up the *Laus Perennis*, singing uninterruptedly day and night, the praises of God. Here S. Sigismund retired and received the tonsure, during the brief interval between his dethronement and his murder by the sons of Clovis, A.D. 522-23.

It has been calculated⁵ that during the sixth century alone, eighty-four new monasteries were founded in the valleys of the Rhone and the Saône, ninety-four between the Pyrenees and the Loire, fifty-four between the Loire and the Vosges, and ten between the Vosges and the Rhine. The princely munificence of the early Merovingians fostered this religious development. Many a royal country seat, or villa, to which the court had been wont to resort for hunting, was bestowed on some saintly bishop or hermit, and became a centre of Christianity to the surrounding population.

But the wildest and most inaccessible spots were those which were preferred by hermits and monks; for in them they had less chance of being interrupted in their devotions. Often they would fly to a forest, where they would have to cut their way with their axes, and to creep and climb through fallen trees and brushwood.

⁵ This calculation is made from Mabillon by Mignet in "*Memoire sur la Conversion de l'Allemagne par les Moines*," p. 32. Ap. *Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. vii.

There, in a cave, or hut made of branches, or perchance an old ruin, they would take up their abode, regardless alike of the bandits and the wild beasts who infested the wilderness.

Lawless men were more to be feared than wild beasts. Many a hermit was robbed of his axe or his small supply of bread; and sometimes he was murdered by bandits, who, mistaking him for a seeker of buried treasure, were irritated on discovering his poverty. More frequently, however, the sanctity of the hermit would touch their hearts, and even convert them. Thus S. Lauromar, afterwards abbot of a monastery in Perche, about A.D. 590⁶, while living as a hermit, suddenly found himself surrounded by a wild band, who at sight of him, fell awe-struck on their knees before him, confessing that they came to murder him for the sake of the treasure which they supposed that he had found. Whereupon he said gently, "God have mercy on you! Turn from your robber's life that you may merit His forgiveness. As for me, I have no treasure on earth. Christ is my only treasure." Then they departed and left him unmolested.

Again, S. Sequanus⁷ being told that cannibals dwelt in a forest which he was about to enter, calmly replied, "It matters not! Only show me the way to it; for if my desires come from God, the ferocity of these people will be turned into the gentleness of the dove." As he was entering the thicket, he knelt down and

⁶ Vit. S. Lauromar. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 322.

⁷ Vit. S. Sequan. cc. vii. viii. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 250.

prayed, "Lord, if Thou orderest me to abide in this wilderness, make me know Thy will, and prosper what Thou hast given me grace to begin." His faith and hope were rewarded; for when the wild men came to know him, they were turned from wolves into lambs, making themselves his servants, and helping him and his companions to build the cells, which were the nucleus from which sprung the abbey and town of S. Seine.

There was also S. Ebrulph^s, A.D. 519—596, who, being accosted in the gloomy forest of Ouche by a brigand, who asked why he came there, answered, "To weep for my sins. With God's protection I fear neither man's threats nor hard labor. He can prepare a table in the wilderness for His servants; and thou, if thou wilt, canst sit with me at it." The robber retired in silence. But the next day he brought the saint three loaves and a honeycomb; and before long he and his companions became the first monks of the abbey of Evroul in the diocese of Lisieux.

As to the wild beasts, not a single instance is known of a hermit becoming their prey. But many cases are on record of their dwelling in peace with these holy men, seeking shelter with them from their pursuers, and even lending themselves to their service. Thus, a hare pressed by the king's dogs, hid itself under S. Marculph's habit, and let him take it in his arms. On seeing this one of the huntsmen cried out fiercely, "How darest thou touch the king's game? Lay it

^s Vit. S. Ebrulf. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. viii. c. i.

down instantly, or I will cut thy throat." Marculph obeyed, but the dogs would not touch it—a fact which was attested by the eye-witnesses before the king⁹.

A stag chased by wolves, fled to S. Lauromar¹, who seeing in it the type of man's soul pursued by the devil, cried out to the wolves, "Cruel, ravening beasts, cease to persecute this poor stag, and return to your dens." Whereupon the wolves paused, and turning round returned to the depths of the forest.

Birds used to nestle in S. Columban's cowl; and he would pass unharmed through packs of wolves, who touched his clothes, but did not dare to hurt him². A wild boar pursued by Clotaire II., took refuge at the altar of S. Desle³, where it was found by the king, lying peaceably, while the saint continued his prayers. Another wild boar found safety with S. Basolus⁴, founder of the monastery of Vièrgy, near Rheims; in attestation of which fact, it was for many centuries the inviolable custom of the neighborhood to spare all game hunted in the forest of Rheims, which could reach the little wood surmounted by the cross of S. Basolus. S. Martin⁵, Abbot of Vertou, in Brittany, about 690, obliged a bear, which had killed his ass, to carry the ass's burden. S. Corbinian⁶, Bishop of

⁹ Vit. S. Marculf, c. xviii. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. i. p. 124.

¹ Vit. S. Lauromar, c. xiv. Ibid. Sæc. i. p. 323.

² Vit. S. Columban, cc. xv. xxx. Ibid. Sæc. ii. pp. 9. 14.

³ Vit. S. Deicol. co. xii. xiii. Ibid. Sæc. ii. p. 99.

⁴ Vit. S. Basol. cc. xxii. xxiii. Ibid. Sæc. ii. p. 68.

⁵ Vit. S. Martin, Miracul. i. Ibid. Sæc. i. p. 362.

⁶ Vit. S. Corbinian, c. xi. Ibid. Sæc. iii. t. i. p. 476.

Freisingen, about A.D. 720, made a bear, which had killed one of his pack-horses in the Tyrol, carry its load after him to Rome. Similar cases, occurring in all ages and countries, and authenticated by eye-witnesses, documentary evidence, and enduring popular traditions, leave no room for rational doubt as to the broad fact of the power acquired by hermits and monks over the animal creation. Marvellous as is this fact, it cannot properly be said to be contrary to the order of nature. For, as man lost his dominion over the animals through sin, it is very conceivable that he should recover it whenever he regained close union with God: and thus, as S. Bede says, "It is not to be wondered at if all creatures are in subjection to the will and governance of him, who serves the Creator of all creatures faithfully and with his whole heart".

In glancing over the religious history of this age, a few words are due to S. Clotilda, to whose zeal France owes its faith. Her life was a sorrowful one⁷. In early youth she had seen her father massacred, her mother drowned, her only sister driven ignominiously into exile, while she herself, a captive in the house of her parents' murderer, was at last compelled to marry a Pagan. There came a brighter period, from the conversion of Clovis, A.D. 495, to his death A.D. 511. But whether in sorrow or in joy, Clotilda was equally devoted to God's service. Under the roof of her

⁷ Vit. S. Cuthbert. c. xxi. Acta SS. O. S. B. Sæc. ii. p. 859.

⁸ Vit. S. Clotildis. Ibid. Sæc. i. p. 92.

Arian uncle she alone had clung to the true faith, and had sought consolation for her own unhappiness in charity to the poor. To her zeal her husband owed his conversion; and the influence which that event gave her, she exerted in advancing Christianity and building churches and monasteries. The principal of these were the church in Paris dedicated to S. Peter, but since called S. Geneviève; a monastery at Tours, also dedicated to S. Peter; and another at Audely, near Rouen, dedicated to the Mother of God; so that from the very first, devotion to Christ's Vicar and to our Blessed Lady, took root in Catholic France.

But in spite of Clotilda's virtues, the German nature was not yet dead in her. The love of her old Burgundian home still lived in her heart, and with it was associated the old German idea of revenge. On the death of her husband⁹, she said to her sons, Clodomir, Childebart, and Clotaire, "My dear children, let me not have reason to repent that I have reared you with such care. Show me that you feel the injury that has been done me, and revenge the cruel murder of my father and mother." The young princes responded to her appeal by marching against Sigismund, who had succeeded his father Gundebald, and totally defeating him. He escaped to Agaune, where he became a monk; but after a time his retreat was betrayed by one of his subjects to Clodomir, who carried him, his wife, and his two sons, captive to Orleans.

Before long Godemar, Sigismund's brother, recovered

⁹ Rohrbacher, t. ix. l. xlv. pp. 34. 133.

the throne of his fathers; whereupon Clodomir, greatly enraged, determined to kill his captives before setting out to reconquer Burgundy. S. Avitus, Abbot of Mici, boldly confronted the angry king, and said to him, "O king, if for God's sake thou hast mercy on thy captives, God will be with thee and give thee victory. But if thou killest them, what thou doest to them will befall thee and thy children." But Clodomir only answered, "It is folly to bid a man leave his enemy behind him." Sigismund, his wife, and two sons were murdered, A.D. 524, and their bodies, deprived of Christian burial, were thrown into a well near Columelle, on the frontiers of the Orleannais and Beauce, which has ever since been known as the well of S. Sigismond or S. Simond.

It was not long before S. Avitus's prediction was fulfilled. Clodomir was defeated and killed by the Burgundians, and his head, placed on the point of a pike, was borne in triumph through their ranks. His wife was taken by his brother, Clotaire, as one of his many wives; and his three infant sons were committed to the care of their grandmother. She lavished such love on them that her son Childebert became jealous, and said to Clotaire, "Our mother is so fond of these children, that she will give them their father's kingdom. Let us then kill them, or tonsure them, and divide the kingdom between us." For long hair was among the Franks the distinctive mark of a freeman, and the tonsure of a Merovingian disqualified him for the throne. Accordingly, Childebert and Clotaire asked

Clotilda to send them the children, under the pretence of placing them on their father's throne; and she, suspecting no evil, made a feast on the joyful occasion, saying to them, "I shall no longer weep for my son's death, if I see you reigning in his stead."

As soon as the brothers got hold of the children, they sent a naked sword and a pair of scissors to Clotilda by Arcadius, a noble of Auvergne, who said to her, "Most glorious lady, your sons, our lords, ask you what is to be done with these children. Do you prefer that they be tonsured and allowed to live, or that they be put to death?" In the first revulsion of feeling Clotilda exclaimed, "I would rather see them dead than tonsured." Whereupon Arcadius, catching at her impulsive exclamation, hurried back to the two kings, and said, "Do as you will, the queen consents." Then Clotaire fell upon the eldest child, who was ten years old, and pierced him with his dagger. At this sight the second child, who was only seven, fell at Childebert's feet, and embracing his knees, cried to him to save him. Childebert, touched with pity, tried to bribe Clotaire to spare the child. But the furious Clotaire exclaimed, "Give him up or die thyself. It is thou who hast drawn me into this affair; and dost thou so soon fail to thy word?" Then Childebert threw the child from him, and Clotaire thrust his dagger into his heart. Thus two of Clodomir's sons paid with their lives for the two sons of Sigismund. His third son, Clodoalde, escaped, and cutting off his hair with his own hand, took refuge with a hermit near Paris,

who brought him up as a monk. He built a monastery, in which he lived and died; and his memory is still preserved in the name of the church, town, and palace of S. Cloud.

Overwhelmed with grief embittered by remorse, Clotilda retired to the tomb of S. Martin at Tours, where she spent the rest of her life in prayer, penance, and works of charity. She died about A.D. 545, and her body was laid beside that of Clovis in their church of S. Peter in Paris.

One of the most interesting personages of this time was Clotaire's queen, S. Radegunda¹, a Thuringian princess. Thuringia was at this time a powerful kingdom², held by three brothers, one of whom, Berthar, was Radegunda's father. But her uncle Hermanfried, wishing to be sole king, dethroned and killed both his brothers with the aid of Thierry I. son of Clovis. Thierry now claimed a share in the kingdom, which Hermanfried refused him; whereupon Thierry and his brother Clotaire united their forces, and calling the Saxons to their aid, conquered Thuringia, which henceforth ceased to be an independent kingdom, and was divided between the Franks and the Saxons, about A.D. 530. Hermanfried perished by treachery: and Radegunda and her brother were

¹ Vit. S. Radegund. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. p. 302. This life is in two books, of which the first is by Venantius Fortunatus, her friend and secretary; and the second by Baudonivia, one of her nuns, who had been in her service when she was a queen.

² Seiders, Bonifacius, c. iii. p. 90.

taken prisoners by the Franks. Thus Radegunda's life opened in sorrow.

Though she was only a child, her beauty was so great, that both Thierry and Clotaire wished to have her, and nearly came to blows about her. In the usual division of the spoil she fell to Clotaire, who placed her at Athies, one of his villas on the Somme, to be carefully educated till she should be old enough to marry him. Here she received instruction in the ordinary feminine accomplishments, and also in the learning of the day. But even at this early age her heart was given to God. In talking with her young companions about their future lot, she would wish only to shed her blood in martyrdom. She would save the food which remained after her meals, and collecting a number of poor children, would wash them, and wait on them as a servant while they ate. It was also her delight to go through the services of the Church in her oratory, singing psalms in procession, with a wooden cross carried before her, all being done with great reverence and devotion.

When the time for her marriage arrived, she fled by night in a boat with a few attendants. But she was soon overtaken, and brought to Soissons, where Clotaire made her his queen, A.D. 538, and showed her publicly to his subjects, according to the custom of the Franks, though he had already as many as five wives.

Radegunda's marriage made no change in her devotion. She avoided all worldly pomp as much as

possible, and when compelled to appear in royal state, she wore haircloth under her robes. Her charity was unbounded, for she deemed every thing wasted which was not spent upon Christ's poor; and not content with making gifts, she collected a number of poor persons under her roof, on whom she waited in person, washing them, dressing their sores, and performing the most menial offices for them.

Once when she was travelling, she happened to pass a temple, where sacrifice to idols was being offered; whereupon she stopped, and ordered her attendants to destroy the temple and altar. The idolaters, in defence of their gods, rushed upon her party with swords and staves; but she calmly kept her seat on her horse, and did not move till the shrine sank in the flames, and peace was restored through her prayers.

Often when evening closed in, and she was expected at the king's table, she would be found making candles for the altar; for she was in the habit of making with her own hands, those that were always kept burning in her oratory before the Blessed Sacrament. And in the middle of the night she would rise from her bed, and remain in prayer till she was almost frozen. Often the king would scold her, and would complain that he had got a true nun, and not a queen; but still his love for her continued, and whenever he spoke angrily to her he would make amends for his rough words by rich gifts. She used her influence with him to obtain liberty for captives, pardon for criminals, and justice for the oppressed.

After six years she regained her liberty in an unexpected way. A young brother had been the sole companion of her captivity, and she loved him tenderly. Clotaire now put him to death for some unknown reason, though he was perfectly innocent. On hearing of her loss Radegunda indignantly exclaimed, "This day I am doubly a slave. I feel again the full weight of the enemy's yoke." She sought Clotaire, and in an interview, the particulars of which are lost, she obtained his leave to quit his palace and throne, and devote herself to God's service.

No sooner was she free than she left Soissons, and going to Noyon, besought S. Medard, the bishop, to give her the veil, and consecrate her to God. S. Medard hesitated, and some of Clotaire's leudes, who were in the church, dragged him with violence from the altar, forbidding him to presume to consecrate one whom their king had publicly made his queen. Then Radegunda went to the sacristy, and exchanged her royal robes for a nun's habit; after which, returning to the church and walking up to the altar, she said to S. Medard, "If thou delayest to consecrate me, if thou fearest man rather than God, the Good Shepherd will demand an account of thee for the soul of one of His sheep." Overcome by this solemn adjuration, S. Medard, without farther hesitation, consecrated her³.

³ Some writers have found a difficulty about Radegunda's consecration, because the Church does not permit a married woman to take religious vows unless her husband does the same. But the fact that Clotaire had already several wives, proves that his union with her could not have been a Christian marriage, but only a national form by which

As soon as the ceremony was over, she offered on the altar the royal robe, the crown, and the jewels, that as queen she would have worn on a high festival; and her cincture of solid gold she broke into pieces, and distributed among the poor.

Radegunda now retired to a royal villa at Saix, in Poitou, between Tours and Poitiers. On her way she stopped at the tomb of S. Martin at Tours, where, while Mass was being said, she lay prostrate on the floor, shedding tears of joy and fervor. After Mass she offered on the altar one of the rich robes with the jewels she used to wear on state occasions; and on each recurring festival, she celebrated her own joyful release from worldly pomps, by making similar gifts to various hermits and abbots.

At Saix she had free scope for all the pious practices, in which she had contrived to indulge even amid the restraints of her husband's palace. Her food was vegetables and herbs, and her drink was water mixed with honey or perry. During Lent she lived in solitude, eating only every fourth day, and grinding with her own hand all the corn that was required for her table. Besides those who were daily fed at her gate, she had a number of sick poor, to whose care she devoted herself. Every Thursday and Saturday she would bathe them, cleansing their neglected hair, dressing their sores, serving them at table, feeding those who were blind,

he publicly made her his queen. The tone of her adjuration and S. Medard's response to it, show that it was the fear of man and no law of the Church, which caused his hesitation.

and performing the most menial and loathsome offices for them. It seemed as if she could never do enough to satisfy her love for Him, whom she beheld in His suffering members. Lepers, whom every one shunned, were her especial care. Fearless of infection, she would embrace them, wash and kiss their sores, feed, clothe and wait on them, heeding not the remonstrances of her attendants, but ever contemplating in them the tender compassion of Him, who, for love of sinners, deigned to be wounded, despised and "thought as it were a leper," in order to heal the foul leprosy of sin.

During the first year of her stay at Saix our Lord appeared to her one night in a vision, with a number of men placed on all parts of His body, while she sat upon His knee. And He said to her, "Now thou sittest upon my knee, but after a time thou shalt have a place in my bosom;" and He showed her what graces she would hereafter enjoy. This vision gave fresh fervor to her already fervent spirit; but like all such favors it seemed to be sent to prepare her for fresh trials. Before long there came a rumor, that Clotaire was about to force her to return to him. Hereupon, in great distress, she sent one of her female servants to John, a holy monk of Chinon, whom she greatly revered, asking for his prayers, offering on his altar the jewels and gold which still remained to her, and bidding the woman say to him, that "she would rather die than return to that earthly king, after she had already enjoyed communion with the King of Heaven." The holy man watched and prayed all through the night, and the

next morning he sent her word, that God would not permit the king to do as he wished.

It has already been told how Clotaire, driven by his passionate love for Radegunda, had sought to recover her; how, awed by religious motives, he had not only desisted, but had given her the means to found the Abbey of Ste. Croix, at Poitiers, A.D. 545; and how, some years later the temptation had returned, and had been conquered by the aid of S. Germain, Bishop of Paris.

The Abbey of Ste. Croix was a double monastery, consisting of two separate houses for men and women. The two communities were quite distinct, but they had the same rule, and common property. Some double monasteries were governed by the abbot; but at Ste. Croix, as in many others founded by women, both communities were subject to the abbess.

Radegunda had always been very devout to the saints, and had been at great pains to obtain their relics, even sending as far as Jerusalem for that of a martyr. But nothing less than a portion of the True Cross would satisfy her for her own monastery; and she sent messengers to Constantinople to solicit a piece from the Emperor Justin. When it arrived at Poitiers, the whole community, with all the clergy and laity of the town and neighborhood, went in solemn procession to meet it, singing the beautiful hymns, "Vexilla Regis," and "Pange lingua," which were written for the occasion by Venantius Fortunatus,

the great poet of the sixth century⁴. As he has said that he wrote some of his poems from the words that dropped from S. Radegunda's lips, it is not too much to suppose, that these hymns were the effusions of her joy and sanctity.

Radegunda passed the remaining forty years of her life in the Abbey of Ste. Croix. In all her words and actions there shone forth the finest characteristics of the German woman—warm and tender affections, devotedness, generosity, courage, and strong purpose, all supernaturalized, and directed to the object most worthy of human love.

Round her gathered a group of young girls, to the number of two hundred, some of royal and noble blood, others of poor and lowly birth, and among them Chrodilde and Basine, daughters of Caribert and Chilperic, the sons of Clotaire. She went to Arles to study the rule of S. Cæsarius, which she established in her convent; and through her influence the bishops of the second Council of Tours, A.D. 566, sanctioned the irrevocable enclosure of consecrated nuns⁵.

On this spiritual family she lavished her warmest affections. She often said to them, "I love you so

⁴ Venantius Fortunatus was an Italian, and at this time a layman. He loved and revered S. Radegunda as a mother, and acted as her secretary and steward to the convent. Some French writers give the authorship of "*Pange lingua*" to Claudien Mamert; but in the last edition of Venantius Fortunatus's works his right to it is proved from the most ancient MSS. *Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. vii. c. vi.

⁵ *Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. vii. c. vi.

much that I no longer think of my parents, nor remember that I had a king for my husband. I have chosen you to be my daughters, and you, young flowers that I have planted, are my light, my life, my rest, and all my happiness. Act with me in this world, so that we may rejoice together in the world to come. Let us serve God with perfect faith and love; let us seek Him in fear and simplicity of heart, so that we may be able to say to Him with confidence, "Lord, give what Thou hast promised, for we have done what Thou hast commanded."

But her love for this new family that God had given her, did not narrow her heart, nor make her forgetful of those public objects which had claimed her prayers as a queen. She prayed constantly for all the kings between whom France was divided, and all of whom she loved. She was unremitting in her efforts to promote peace among them; and when any important public affair was pending, she would redouble her prayers and penances, and would make her congregation pray night and day, urging them to do so fervently, that through their intercessions the miseries of war might be mitigated, and peace and safety granted to their native land. Then if God heard their prayers, and sent peace and victory to the kings, she would give vent to her gratitude by fresh acts of devotion.

All the time that was not occupied in works of charity, she gave to prayer and spiritual reading. She established the custom of reading aloud during

meals and in every interval of leisure. Even during the brief period that she allowed herself for sleep, some one would frequently read to her; and often if the reader, thinking that she was asleep, paused in the reading, she would rouse herself and ask, "Why are you silent? Don't stop reading." As if, like the Spouse in the Canticle, she would say, "I sleep, and my heart watcheth." At other times she would chant psalms in her sleep. Also, even though she might have already chanted the whole office in her cell, she would rise at midnight to go through it with the community in choir, unconscious of fatigue, and rejoicing to be able to say with truth, "I rose at midnight to give praise to Thee."

Whether sleeping, or waking, or however she might be employed, she was so absorbed in God that she took no notice of any thing which was not connected with devotion or charity. It happened one day, as evening was closing in, that some musicians and dancers passed along the walls of the convent, singing noisily as they went by. Radegunda had been praying for a long time, when one of two nuns who was with her, said gaily, "Madam, I used formerly to sing one of those tunes." "I greatly wonder," answered the saint, "that being espoused to God, thou takest pleasure in that worldly noise." "Indeed, madam," replied the nun, "I only recognized in the dancers' music two of my own songs." "God is my witness," answered Radegunda, "that I did not hear a single note of that profane music."

Nor was her thirst for suffering inferior to her devotion. Not content with observing the most severe fasts, with wearing a hair-shirt, and encircling her neck, arms, and waist with iron chains, which were drawn so tight that they wore into her skin, she was always inventing new modes by which she could share the sufferings of her Lord, and in some degree satiate her longing desire to shed her blood in martyrdom. On two occasions she made an iron cross red-hot, and applied it to different parts of her body; and at another time she rubbed burning coals over her limbs. And all this she did secretly, not betraying her sufferings by word or look, till the blood oozing through her clothes revealed her secret.

The crowning virtue of humility placed the seal on her sanctity. When she had established perfect discipline in the community, she would not let them elect her as abbess, but transferred that dignity to Agnes, a young girl whom she had herself educated. Then she took her place as one of the other nuns, distinguished only by her humility and obedience. She would rise early and clean the shoes of the nuns while they slept; and would take on herself all the most arduous and disagreeable tasks in the house—cooking, scrubbing, washing dishes, fetching wood, drawing water, straining oil, toiling in the laundry, and waiting on the sick, even when it was not her turn to do so.

Thus Radegunda lived for about forty years. The year before her death she saw in a vision the place in heaven prepared for her; and our Lord, as a young man

of marvellous beauty, came to her, and caressing her, said, "Why dost thou ask for My presence so ardently with tears, and seek for Me with sighs and prayers, and afflict thyself with penance, when I am always with thee?" Up to the day of her death she kept the rule, and joined the community in the choir, performing to the last all that she had prescribed to others. Then, having long before died to the flesh through her mortifications and love of God, she passed away quietly while her children stood round her bed, weeping and beating their breasts with all the wildness of barbaric grief.

Gregory, Bishop of Tours, celebrated her obsequies. As she lay in her coffin he was struck with her remarkable beauty, though she was then above sixty years of age. The nun Baudonivia, who served her when she was on the throne, followed her into the cloister, and after her death wrote her biography, has left a touching record of the passionate sorrow of those two hundred German women, who had been drawn to her by the sweet odor of her sanctity, and to whom, while so severe to herself, she had been a loving and indulgent mother. When the corpse was borne out of the monastery to be laid in the Church of our Lady, where all the community were buried, the nuns, whose strict cloister prevented their following the procession, rushed to the walls of the convent, drowning the sound of the chanting by their lamentations, and beseeching the bearers to pause at the base of a certain tower, so

as to indulge them with a last glance at her face before she finally passed out of their sight.

The Benedictines early took part in the religious movement in France. In the year 542 Innocent, Bishop of Mans, sent messengers to Monte Cassino, to ask for some monks to come and found a monastery in his diocese. S. Benedict chose S. Maurus⁶ and four other monks for the purpose, and gave them the rule written with his own hand, and also a pound weight and a measure for the daily allowance of bread and wine.

On their way to France Maurus and his companions visited Agaune and Condat, and then went on to the abbey of Font Rouge, near Dreux, which had been built by S. Romanus, the monk who had fed S. Benedict in his cave. They arrived at Font Rouge in the evening of Good Friday, which that year fell on the 20th of March, and were joyfully received by Romanus. But their joy was clouded when, after the evening office, Maurus told Romanus that their father had

⁶ Vit. S. Maur. by Faustus, one of the monks who went with him to France. [Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. p. 263. Some writers have doubted the authenticity of this biography, because Theodebert is said to have possessed Anjou, which they suppose must have belonged to Clodomir, and have fallen to Childebert or Clotaire. This is not a valid objection, because the boundaries of the Merovingian kingdoms are ill defined, and it is uncertain whether Theodebert did not possess a certain suzerainty over the whole. Also, though Gregory of Tours says (Hist. l. iii. c. xviii.) that Clodomir's kingdom was divided between Childebert and Clotaire; Procopius (De Bell. Goth. l. i. c. xiii.) says that Theodebert shared it with them. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. Note, p. 274. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. viii. c. ii.

warned them that he should die the next day. All through the night they watched, and prayed that S. Benedict might have a happy death. And at nine o'clock the next morning, as Maurus lay prostrate on the pavement of the church, he saw a stream of light, as already described, and a man clothed in glory said to him, "This is the road by which Benedict, the beloved of God, has ascended to heaven." Thus they all knew that their father was dead. But Maurus consoled them, saying, "We ought to rejoice rather than to weep at his removal, for we shall possess a powerful patron, and he will be nearer us now than when he was in the flesh."

Maurus and his companions found on their arrival at Mans, that Bishop Innocent was dead, and the new bishop refused to admit them into his diocese. Their position was now a difficult one in a strange land, so far from all their friends. But Harderad, one of the messengers whom Bishop Innocent had sent to fetch them, took them to his own house in Anjou, and entertained them hospitably while he sent the account of their position to Florus, a cousin of his at the court of Theodebert, son of Thierry I., King of Austrasia, and grandson of Clovis.

Florus was a man of great power and wealth, and held the office of Viscount of Anjou; but from his early youth his heart had been devoted to God. It had long been his wish to meet with some monks, for whom he could build a monastery, and to whom he could give his only son, hoping that he himself also might be

allowed to quit the world and devote himself to God's service. As soon as he heard about S. Maurus's difficulty, he joyfully seized the opportunity to carry out his preconceived design. With Theodebert's permission he made over to S. Maurus the domain of Glanfeuil on the banks of the Loire, and gave him his only son, Bertulph, who was eight years of age, to be trained as a monk, vowing that if it were God's will, he would himself join the community at some future time.

The land that fell thus unexpectedly into Maurus's possession, was bounded on one side by the Loire, and on the other by a high hill. On the slope of this hill the monastery was built; and as Theodebert liberally supplied materials and the best workmen in his dominions, the building was well suited to its purpose, and worthy of its royal and noble founders. It contained four churches, the largest of which, used by the monks for their services in choir, was dedicated to S. Peter; the second was dedicated to S. Martin, the patron of their old home at Monte Cassino, whose convent of Marmoutier, on the Loire, was at no great distance; the third, which was the smallest of all, was dedicated to S. Severin, the Apostle of Noricum; and the fourth, which rose to a great height in the form of a quadrilateral tower at the entrance of the monastery, was dedicated to S. Michael the Archangel.

It took eight years to erect this building, and during this time the number of Maurus's monks had increased from four to forty. When the monastery was com-

pleted, Florus asked leave of Theodebert to fulfil his vow. In those unsettled times, the strong arm of a brave and faithful noble was worth far more to a king than lands and gold; and Theodebert was very loath to part with his trusty leude. And when at last he consented, he went with him to see the place which was to be the home of his valued friend.

As soon as he arrived at the Abbey of Glanfeuil and caught sight of Maurus, he dismounted from his horse, and fell at his feet; and when Maurus raised him, he besought him with tears to pray for him and his son Theodebald, whom he presented to him. He went through the monastery, making minute inquiries as to every particular of the daily life. He asked for Bertulph, who was now sixteen, and also for the monks who had come from Monte Cassino, and embraced them all. He then assisted at Florus's tonsure, cutting off the first lock of his hair as he knelt before the altar, confirming all his donations to the abbey, and adding to them many valuable gifts of his own. When he was about to go away, he asked to be allowed to bid Florus farewell; and on seeing him in his monk's habit, he threw himself into his arms and wept. Then exhorting him to serve God as perfectly as he had served his king, he kissed him frequently, and asking for the abbot's blessing, he departed. Florus lived twelve years as a monk, and died a holy death.

Theodebert continued his favors to the Benedictines as long as he lived. His son, Theodebald, also, was very liberal to them; and when, after his premature

death, the whole kingdom devolved to Clotaire I., they still enjoyed the royal protection.

S. Maurus governed the community for nearly forty years, and saw its members increase to one hundred and forty. Two years and a half before his death, his bodily infirmities disabling him for active work, he resigned his office of abbot to Bertulph, who had grown old under his instruction. Then, retiring to a cell which he had built for himself near the Church of S. Martin, he spent his last days in prayer and contemplation. When he felt that the end was come, he had himself laid before the altar of S. Martin, where he expired on the 15th of January, A.D. 584. Two of the monks who had accompanied him into France, had died before him; but the other two, Faustus and Simplicius, after his death returned by his desire to Monte Cassino, where Faustus wrote his life.

The early history of the Benedictine Order in France is buried in obscurity. The councils held in Gaul during this century, occupied themselves with laying down the first principles of monastic discipline, without mentioning any particular rule⁷. There can be no doubt that the Benedictine rule was adopted by some of the many communities founded at this time; but it was not till the next century, when it had been tested by comparison with that of S. Columban, that its great superiority was acknowledged, and it began to take its future place as the universal rule of France.

But great as was the advance of religion at this time,

⁷ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii. c. ii.

it seems to have taken hold chiefly on the Gallo-Roman population, while the Franks, though baptized, were not yet subdued by the Christian spirit. The Merovingian kings, despite their impulsive generosity to the Church, would not always brook opposition to their will; and the history of this period by Gregory of Tours, is full of the acts of violence committed by them against bishops and monasteries. Pretextat, Bishop of Rouen, was killed at the altar by order of Fredegonde. Nicetius of Treves was banished, for refusing to say Mass before Theodebert till the excommunicated leudes left the church; and S. Avitus, for excommunicating Clotaire I. The two royal ladies, Chrodielde and Basine^s, who were reared in the Abbey of Ste. Croix, enraged that one or other was not elected abbess, quitted the convent, and took possession of the cathedral of S. Hilary in Poitiers, where they maintained themselves by hiring a band of robbers, who broke into the convent, ill treated the nuns, pillaged the sanctuary, and drove away with bludgeons the bishops who were appointed to try their cause. And all was done with impunity, till at length Basine submitted of her own accord to the abbess, and Chrodielde was induced to retire peaceably to an estate, which King Gontram gave her for her support. In fact, it was evident that the refined Gallo-Roman clergy could not cope with these impulsive barbarians, and that a stronger and sterner instrument was needed to make an impression on them.

^s Greg. Turon. Hist. Eccles. l. v. c. xxxix.—xliii. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii. c. v.

Such an instrument had already been provided by the Vicar of Christ, through one of those wonderful chains of Providential circumstances, which in all ages prove the Divine character of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IRISH MONKS.

AT a farm in the neighbourhood of the village of Bonavem Taberniæ, in Strato-Clud, or Alclud¹, not far from the modern Boulogne, there lived, in the latter part of the fourth century, a deacon called Calphurnius. Like too many others in that troubled age, he "had not kept God's commandments, nor heeded the laws of the Church²;" but had married Concha the sister,

¹ Confess. S. Patricii. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. p. 532. S. Patrick says that his father's farm was in Bonavem Taberniæ in Armorica Letha. S. Fiacc, his disciple, says in his hymn in his praise, that he was born at Nemthur, which the Scholiast on this hymn, and the old Irish Tripartite Life, assert to be the same as Alcluda. The Vita Secunda and the Vita Tertia, written by S. Patrick's disciples (Acta SS., Comment. Præv. iii.), identify Nemthur with the Campus Taberniæ; the Vita Quarta adding, that the Armorica Bonavem was "in regione Strato-Clud, or Alclud;" and Probus, who wrote in the eighth century, says that he has ascertained that the "Vicus Bonavem Taburniæ regionis" was in Neustria. Usher, overlooking these ancient authorities, says that he was born at Alcluda in Scotland, now Dumbarton. Lanigan proves (Eccl. Hist. i. 92) that Bonavem Taberniæ was near Boulogne-sur-Mer. Moran, Essays on the Early Irish Church, p. 9.

² Confess. S. Patric. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. p. 533.

or more probably the niece³, of S. Martin of Tours. In the year 372⁴ they had a son, who was baptized by the name of Suchat, but is better known as S. Patrick⁵. When Patrick was sixteen years of age, he was carried off by a band of pirates, who sold him in Ireland to a chieftain called Milchu. He was set to tend herds of swine in the forest, and in this occupation he endured hunger, thirst, nakedness, fatigue, and even hard blows from his savage master.

But happy did this cruel servitude prove to him; for through it his conscience was awakened, so that "even late he remembered his sins, and was converted to God with his whole heart⁶." He now became so filled with the fear and love of God, that while he followed his flock, he would kneel in prayer a hundred times in each day, and as often each night, in the forests and mountains, in the midst of rain, frost, and snow, being insensible to hardships and fatigue, through the fire of love that burnt in his heart.

Thus six years passed away; when one night as he slept, he heard a voice saying, "Thou fastest well. Soon thou wilt return to thy native land." And after a time the voice added, "Behold, thy ship is ready."

³ Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. ii. 11.

⁴ All the old biographers divide S. Patrick's life into four parts of thirty years each, of which two had elapsed before he went to Ireland, A.D. 432, thus fixing his birth A.D. 372. The Bollandist, preferring the authority of Jocelin, an Anglo-Norman of the twelfth century, fixes his birth A.D. 377.

⁵ Chronicon. Sigebert, A.D. 431. Ap. Moran, p. 44. S. Germain changed his name to Magonicus, and Pope Celestine to Patrick.

⁶ Confess. Patric. c. i.

Following God's guidance, Patrick made his escape to the seashore, where he found a ship ready to sail. The captain at first refused angrily to take him on board, because he could not pay his passage. Going away sorrowfully he knelt down to pray; whereupon the captain, though himself a Pagan, called after him, "Come to us, for we see that you have the faith of Christ, make a friendship with us as you will". The Pagan's noble charity soon won its reward. For when they came to land they found themselves in a barren desert, where they were perishing of want, till, in answer to Patrick's prayers, a herd of swine came by, which supplied them with food till they reached an inhabited district⁷.

After spending three months at home, Patrick went with his parents to Armorica, where their party being attacked by a neighbouring tribe, his parents were killed, and he was taken captive. At the end of two months, however, he recovered his liberty, and returned to his kindred in Neustria, who received him as a son. As he had dwelt so long among Pagans, they were anxious about his faith, and questioned him concerning it; but he set their minds at ease by assuring them, that in all his troubles he had never fallen from it. Once more he was carried into captivity by a band of Gauls, who took him to Bordeaux, where some Christians ransomed him.

Resolving now to devote himself to God's service, Patrick made his way to Marmoutier, where he re-

⁷ Confess. ii. 7.

⁸ Ibid. ii. 8.

ceived the tonsure of a monk⁹. After spending some years there he went to Lerins, where he remained for a considerable time. He then crossed the Alps, visited Rome, and other places; and, at length, in the south of Italy, fell in with S. Germain, then Duke of Auxerre, whose acquaintance he had made either at Lerins, or more probably at Tours¹. They lived together for some time "in the isles of the Tyrrhene Sea," praying, meditating, and studying the canons of the Church, in which S. Germain instructed Patrick². They returned together to Auxerre; and when, A.D. 418, S. Germain was called to the episcopate by the unanimous voice of the dying bishop, Amator, and all the clergy and laity of Auxerre³, Patrick received from him the successive ecclesiastical orders⁴.

S. Patrick remained fourteen years longer with S. Germain "in patience, obedience, charity, and chastity⁵," "drinking in no small share of learning regarding the Holy Scriptures, at the source of this

⁹ Probus and Vita Tripartita. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. vii. 48, 49.

¹ The ancient biographers say that S. Patrick was thirty years of age when he made S. Germain's acquaintance, and that he remained thirty years under S. Germain's direction. As he went finally to Ireland A.D. 432, it would hence appear that he must have known S. Germain A.D. 402, when he was at Marmoutier.

² S. Fiacc's Hymn, from Colgau's Trias Thaumaturga. Dicta S. Patritii, in Book of Armagh. Leabhar Breac, in O'Donovan's Tribes and Customs of Hy-Fiachragh. Ap. Moran's Essays, pp. 13—21.

³ Rohrbacher, Hist. Eglise, t. viii. l. xxxix. p. 8.

⁴ Vita Tripartita and Probus. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. vii. 50, and viii. 55.

⁵ Probus. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. viii. 58.

rich fountain⁶." He also accompanied S. Germain to Britain, when he was sent thither A.D. 429, to oppose the Pelagian heresy; and he afterwards returned with him to Gaul.

During this time Patrick received many supernatural favors, and especially visits from Victor, the guardian angel of Ireland, who guided all his principal actions. Soon after he left Ireland, he heard in a vision, the voices of Irish children from the woods of Fochlut, beseeching him to go and preach to them⁷. The angel Victor told him that God had chosen him for this work, and advised him to prepare himself for it by studying under S. Germain⁸. From time to time the vision was repeated, but the appointed season was not yet come.

When S. Germain was in Britain, he fell in with the son of an Irish prince, whom he baptized, and who on his return to Ireland, converted and baptized many of his friends and retainers⁹; thus sowing the first seed of the future Church. This circumstance led S. Germain to turn his thoughts towards the conversion of Ireland, and he cast his eye on Patrick, than whom none was more fitted for the task. But Patrick prayed to our Lord, "Lead me, I beseech Thee, to the seat of the holy Roman Church, that, receiving

⁶ Eric. Vit. S. German. Ap. Moran, p. 16.

⁷ Vit. Tripartit. Ap. Moran, p. 21. Probus. Acta SS. Comment. Præv. ix. 63.

⁸ Tract by Muirchu-Maccu-Matheni, in the Book of Armagh. Ap. Moran, p. 75.

⁹ Acta SS. Maii, t. i. p. 259. Ap. Moran, p. 49.

authority there to preach with confidence Thy sacred truth, the Irish nation may be gathered to Thy fold, through my ministry ¹."

On their return to Gaul Patrick told S. Germain how he had often heard the voices of Irish children, beseeching him to help them; and S. Germain answered, "Go to the successor of S. Peter, Pope Celestine, that he may give you authority; for this privilege belongs to him." Patrick accordingly went to Rome; but the Pope would not sanction his design, for he had already, A.D. 429, sent S. Palladius to Ireland ².

S. Palladius was the deacon of Rome, and was eminent for sanctity. But his mission to Ireland was not successful. He landed in Leinster, where he met with much opposition from the principal chief of that district. Others, however, were converted and baptized, and for them he built three churches. In one of these called Kill-fine, probably the modern Dunlavin, he left the books of Holy Scripture and the relics of S. Peter and S. Paul, which the Pope had given him; in another at Donard, near Dunlavin, two of his companions were buried and long venerated; and the third was called Teach-na-Roman, or house of the Romans. Finding that he could not do much good in Ireland, he resolved to return to Rome. But

¹ Probus. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. viii. 55.

² Scholiast on S. Fiacc's Hymn. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. ix. 63. The date of S. Palladius's mission is taken from Acta SS. Mart. xvii., Comment. Præv. vi. 39—44.

he was driven by a tempest to the land of the Picts, where he built a church at Fordun, in which he soon after died. Some, however, say that he suffered martyrdom³.

Meanwhile Patrick had returned to S. Germain. But the voices of the Irish children continued to call him; wherefore S. Germain sent him again to Rome, with Segetius, a priest, who could bear witness to his spotless life and pure faith. Now all the clergy of Rome agreed, that no one was so well suited for the Irish mission as Patrick, who was "a man of religious life and sanctity, of angelic aspect, adorned with heavenly wisdom, and enriched with every virtue⁴." And Celestine, hearing of the death of Palladius, said, "No man can receive any thing on earth, save he to whom it is given from above." Then Patrick was consecrated by the permission of "Celestine and Theodosius, the younger. It was Amatorex who consecrated him," and Celestine gave him the name of Patrick⁵. "Celestine, it is said, did not live more than one week after Patrick's ordination. Pope Sixtus succeeded him, and in the first year of his pontificate," A.D. 432, "Patrick arrived in Ireland⁶."

³ Trias Thaumaturg. Colgau, pp. 5, 13, 38. Ap. Moran, pp. 7, 8.

⁴ Officium Canonic. Lateranen. Antiquiss. Ap. Moran, p. 11.

⁵ Chronicon Sigeberti, A.D. 431. Ap. Moran, p. 44.

⁶ Scholiast on S. Fiacc's Hymn. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. ix. 64. All the old writers say that S. Patrick received his authority from Pope Celestine. In the Tripartite Life (Colgau, p. 123) he is said to have been consecrated by "Celestine, with the approval of Germanus and Amatorex, the Roman;" but the others say that he was consecrated by Amatorex or Amator, but who he was, is uncertain.

For sixty years⁷ S. Patrick labored in Ireland. Thirty years he went about preaching the faith, and thirty more he spent in founding monasteries and schools, and training his barbarian sons in the spiritual life and in the learning of the age. The Irish language seems to have been already reduced to a written form⁸; for S. Patrick is said to have burnt the idolatrous books of the Irish Druids, and also to have assisted at a council held by King Laoghaire, when the ancient books of the Pagan laws were revised by three kings, three bards, and three bishops, and the Christian code of Brehon laws, still extant, was compiled. This old written character was known only to the bards and the initiated, and is now quite lost; and for it S. Patrick substituted what was then the Roman alphabet of the rest of Europe, but which has since become peculiar to Ireland, tracing it out for his converts with his own hand, and patiently teaching them the first rudiments of education. He led them to use their own language for writing poetry, history, the lives of saints, and spiritual treatises, Latin being reserved for the sacred

⁷ S. Patrick's will, as given in the Tripartite Life, and translated by Usher, is as follows:—

“Ter denis annis peragravi lætus Iernam,
Ter denis aliis versatus in æde Sabelli,
Centum et vicinos annos vivendo peregi.”

Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. vi. 42. All the old writers give sixty years as the length of S. Patrick's sojourn in Ireland; but the Acta SS., on Jocelin's authority, curtail it to forty-four years, and date his death A.D. 476.

⁸ Todd, S. Patrick, c. iii. pp. 483, 511.

offices alone⁹. So marvellous was the success of his two-fold work, that even before his death Ireland, on the one hand, had won her peculiar title of Isle of Saints and Sacred Isle, a second Thebaid of ascetic virtue¹, and on the other, had become the great western school of sacred and classical learning.

The Church which he founded, has been characterized even to the present day by three graces, which are always inseparably united. Her faith has never been sullied by the least spot or shade of heresy. The number of her saints is countless; first an unbroken procession of bishops and confessors, hermits and virgins, followed by an army of white-robed martyrs. And finally, she has always obeyed the decree of her father, which placed her under the authority of the Apostolic See², and has ever borne in mind his exhort-

⁹ Vit. Tripartit. Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. i. 5, 7.

¹ "Passim *Insula Sanctorum* et *Insula Sacra* dicebatur . . . etiam ad asceticæ vitæ fovenda exercitia, ut Tebais altera, communisque ad sapientiae, sacrarum scripturarum vacandum studiis Occidentis ludus litterarius." Colgan, Acta SS. p. 535, on the Litany of S. Ængus, the Culdee, written A.D. 799, which is to be found in the Leabhar Breac in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, and also in the Book of Leinster in Trinity College, Dublin. Ap. Petrie's Round Towers of Ireland, part ii. section ii. p. 135. Bolland, Acta SS. Mart. xvii. Comment. Præv. i.

² The Canon of S. Patrick preserved in that part of the Book of Armagh "which was copied from the book written by S. Patrick's own hand" (Curry's Lectures, p. 372; Petrie, Antiquities of Tara, p. 81), is thus translated by Usher: "Whenever any cause that is very difficult and unknown to all the judges of the Scottish nations shall arise, it is rightly to be referred to the see of the archbishop of the Irish (that is to say, of Patrick), and to the examination of the prelate thereof. But if there, by him and his wise men, a cause of this nature cannot easily be made up, we have decreed it shall be sent to the See Apostolic, that is to say,

ation, "The Church of the Irish is a Church of Romans: as you are Christians, so be ye Romans³."

To this Irish Thebaid crowds of Romans, Italians, Gauls, Germans, Britons, Picts, and English, were attracted during many centuries by the fame of its monasteries, schools, and saints⁴; and in return, countless bands of Irish monks went forth to carry the light of faith to Pagan nations in every part of Europe, from the southern extremity of Italy to the almost fabulous shores of Iceland.

The most celebrated of these Irish missionaries was S. Columban, the chosen instrument through whom the fierce spirit of the Franks was brought under the yoke of Christ. He was born in Leinster, about A.D. 540⁵.

to the chair of the Apostle Peter, which hath the authority of the city of Rome." *Religion of the Ancient Irish*, p. 84. Ap. Moran, p. 120.

³ "Ecclesia Scottorum immo Romanorum; ut Christiani et Romani sitis." *Dicta S. Patritii*, in the Book of Armagh. Ap. Moran, p. 23. That the Irish Church acknowledged the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, is proved by the most ancient liturgical works, hymns, and penitentials, the collection of canons made A.D. 700, and the writings of the oldest Irish authors. Full details of this subject are given in Moran's *Essays on the Irish Church*, Essay i. Part iii. and the Appendices. The close union between the Irish and Roman Churches, is also seen in the constant pilgrimages to Rome.

⁴ Colgau. *Acta SS.* p. 530. Ap. *Fetrie's Round Towers*, p. 134. Many names of foreigners are found among S. Patrick's disciples and in the lives of the earliest Irish saints; and a multitude of foreign saints buried in Ireland, are invoked in the Litany of S. Ængus, written A.D. 799.

⁵ Montalembert gives A.D. 543 as the date of S. Columban's birth, and A.D. 573 as that of his arrival in France (*Moines d'Occident*, t. ii. l. ix. c. ii.). Dr. Moran says that he was fifty when he went to France. But Jonas of Bobbio, an almost contemporary biographer, says that he was only thirty when he left Ireland (*Vit. S. Columban*, c. vii.; *Acta SS. O. S. B.* sæc. ii. p. 5); whence Mabillon, apparently reckoning back

From his earliest years his mother, foreseeing his future greatness, took pains to shield him from all associations that could sully his innocence, and to have him instructed in the learning of the age. But as he advanced into manhood his remarkable beauty exposed him to dangerous temptations. In vain did he take refuge in prayer and study. Still the temptation pursued him; till at length, at the suggestion of an aged female hermit, he resolved to seek safety in flight. His mother strove earnestly to detain him, and finding her entreaties unavailing, she threw herself on the ground along the threshold of the door. But overcoming his filial tenderness, he stepped over her body, and clearing the threshold, bade her and his home a final farewell.

He first placed himself⁶ under the care of Silenis, an abbot who had a great reputation as a teacher. Silenis soon perceived the genius and sanctity of his new pupil. In order to call out his powers, he would ask him the meaning of difficult passages of Scripture, instead of explaining them to him, as was his habit with his other pupils; when Columban would give his opinion with great humility, but with such clearness

from the foundation of Luxeuil, A.D. 590, gives A.D. 560 as the date of his birth (note to p. 8 as above). The earlier dates agree best with his own words to the French bishops, about A.D. 602, where he calls himself an old man, worn out by long labors, and also with the fact that S. Gall, who was above sixty years of age A.D. 613, had been his pupil from his youth.

⁶ Vit. S. Columban, by Jonas, a monk of Bobbio, under Attalus, his successor as Abbot of Bobbio. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 1. Some local details are from Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix.

and depth, that the master himself would gain fresh light from his pupil. In this way Columban composed at this time a Commentary on the Psalter, hymns, and other works which were very useful in imparting instruction.

After some time Columban removed to the celebrated monastery of Bangor, where three thousand monks were collected under the rule of the saintly Abbot Comgall. Here he gave himself up to the penitential discipline for which this convent was so famous; seeking by prayer, fasting, and penance, to mortify his passionate nature.

When he had spent many years at Bangor and was thirty years of age, a great desire for the missionary life came upon him, and there ever sounded in his heart the words of God to Abraham, "Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land that I shall show thee." He told his abbot what was passing in his thoughts, and after much prayer, the abbot sorrowfully consented to his departure, and gave him twelve monks as companions of his journey.

The missionary band first crossed to Britain, where they found the Christians retiring before the Pagan Saxons. After a short stay they proceeded to Gaul, resolving that if men's hearts there also were hardened against them, they would pass on to some more distant nation.

But in Gaul they had reached their appointed field of action. Wherever they passed men noticed their

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patience, modesty, humility, and, above all, their perfect union. For they had but one will, and held all things in common, none seeking aught for himself, or wishing to follow his own opinion, but all living together in charity, each preferring others before himself; and if one committed any fault, all united in correcting him. They found that though the people were Christians, yet, in consequence of the disorders of the times, few thought about doing penance for their sins, or had any love for self-mortification. Columban accordingly began to preach wherever he passed, and many were drawn to him by his eloquence, and the miraculous cures that were granted to his prayers. Nor did it fail to be noticed, that whenever he stayed for any time in a house, a spirit of religious fervor stirred up all its inmates to the practice of virtue.

Thus the missionary party crossed Gaul, and appeared at the court of Gontram⁷, king of Burgundy. Gontram was the only surviving son of Clotaire I., and possessed sovereign power over all the Franks. He governed Neustria as guardian to his infant nephew, Clotaire II., the son of Chilperic and Fredegonde; and he directed by his wise influence his nephew Childebert, King of Austrasia, and son to Sigebert and Brunehaut, whom he had chosen for his heir. He is distinguished from all the other Merovingians by the

⁷ Jonas, the monk of Bobbio, says that Columban appeared at the court of Sigebert, King of Austrasia and Burgundy. This is an error, because Sigebert never possessed both kingdoms, and Childebert did not inherit Burgundy till A.D. 593. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 8, note.* Rohrbacher, t. ix. l. xlvii. p. 502.

triumph in him of the Christian spirit over his national barbarism ; and the Church has canonized him for his fear of God, his piety, his clemency, and the penitence with which he atoned for the sins of his early life.

Columban's fame had preceded him, and Gontram was rejoiced at his arrival. And when Columban preached before the court, the pious king and his leudes were so charmed by his eloquence, that Gontram entreated him to take up his abode in his kingdom and not to pass on to other nations, offering to give him lands and all that he might wish for. But Columban answered, that he desired not wealth or lands, but wished only to follow, so far as his weakness permitted, the precept of the Gospel which says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me." To which Gontram replied, "If thou wishest indeed, to take up Christ's cross and follow Him, there is no need for thee to leave us and go further ; for there is in our kingdom no lack of desert places, where thou canst add to thine own merits and also help on our salvation." Overcome by Gontram's entreaties Columban consented to remain, and sought only for some fitting solitude in which to settle himself.

The spot which he selected was the ruins of an old Roman fortification, called Annegrays, situated in the Vosges mountains, then quite wild and uninhabited, and so shut in by rocks and trees as to be almost inaccessible. In this solitude Columban and his monks built a few rude huts for themselves. Their only food was herbs, berries, and the bark of young trees, with

such chance additions as charity might supply. Often weeks passed without their tasting any food except what they could pick up, and sometimes they were in absolute want. But they cared not for such privations, remembering the words of their Lord, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by the word of God," longing only for the Bread of Life, and trusting to God's fatherly care for all else.

Before long a great trouble came to them. One of the brethren fell dangerously ill of fever. Herbs and bark were not fit food for him, and yet they had nought else to give him. Then they all began to pray and fast, asking God to send some food for their sick brother. And it came to pass that on the third day of their fast, there appeared at their door a man with horses laden with bread and flour, who said that a sudden desire had seized him to give an alms to those, who were suffering want in the wilderness for Christ's sake. He asked them to pray for his wife, who had been confined to bed for a year with so bad a fever, that he feared she would never get up. Columban accordingly assembled the brethren, and prayed earnestly that God would have mercy on her. The good man departed after having received Columban's blessing, and on his arrival at home he found his wife sitting up. He asked when the fever had left her, and she told him that it was at the very hour that Columban had prayed for her.

At another time the monks had for nine days no food except herbs and bark, seasoning this poor diet with acts of piety, and rejoicing to find that by this

mortification of the flesh, their ghostly enemies were put to flight. Then it came to pass, that the abbot of a certain monastery was ordered in a vision to send the necessaries of life to Columban, the servant of God, who was living in the forest. He accordingly told his steward, Marculfus, about his vision, and bade him take food to Columban. Marculfus obeyed, and loading his wagon with all that Columban could want, set out for the forest. But when he arrived at its entrance, he found no one who could tell him the way to Columban's huts. In this dilemma he came to the conclusion, that as he was acting in obedience to God, the way would be shown him, and accordingly leaving his horses to take their own course, he followed them trustingly, till, to his surprise, he stood at Columban's door. After presenting his abbot's gift, he retraced his steps, publishing to all whom he met what had happened to him, and how great was the holiness of these dwellers in the forest. From this time many came to visit the monks, and crowds of sick persons were brought to Columban to be cured through his prayers.

The monks were frequently exposed to great danger from the wild beasts who roamed through the forest, and the bands of marauders who passed through it on their pillaging excursions. Once when the Suevi were laying waste the adjoining part of Burgundy, Columban happened to be walking through the thicket, carrying a book of Scripture in a leather satchel on his shoulder, as was the custom of the Irish monks⁸. As he went along

⁸ Monies d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix. c. ii.

meditating on the Word of God, there came into his mind the thought, whether he would rather fall into the hands of lawless men or of furious wild beasts. But quickly repelling the distraction, and arming himself with the sign of the cross, he said to himself, that the ferocity of wild beasts who did not sin, was preferable to the rage of men in mortal sin.

As he was revolving this thought in his mind, he beheld twelve wolves approach, and close in on every side of him; whereupon he stood motionless in the midst of them, saying, "*Deus in adiutorium meum intende. Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.*" The wolves came quite close to him and seized his habit in their mouths, but awed by his courage they did not dare to touch him, and after awhile they passed on. Scarcely was this danger past, than he heard the voices of a band of Suevi close by him. But happily they did not catch sight of him through the dense thicket, and thus he escaped without molestation.

Wild and lonely as was this mountain waste, the solitude was not sufficient to satisfy Columban's ardent longing for uninterrupted communion with God. He therefore went further into the depths of the forest, and finding a cavern in the side of a steep rock shut out from observation by the brushwood, he chose it for his abode. A bear had made it his den, but he said gently to it, "Depart hence, and return not hither," and the beast went away quietly, and was never seen again within seven miles of Annegrays. To this cave he would retire on Sundays and at the solemn seasons

which called forth more special devotion; and here he would remain sometimes for weeks together, absorbed in prayer, eating barely enough to maintain life, and holding no communication with this world, except through a boy who brought him his food, told him what was happening at the monastery, and took back his orders to the brethren. In this retreat he exercised a strange power over the animal creation. Wild beasts and birds of prey would come at his call, sport round him, lick his hand, or perch on his arm. Small birds would nestle in the folds of his cowl, and squirrels would run boldly in and out of the breast of his habit, as if all God's creatures rejoiced in loving familiarity with him who ever abode in loving union with their common Creator. This fact was told to S. Columban's biographer by Chamoald, afterwards Bishop of Lyons, who had himself been an eye-witness of it.

Often he would lay his orders on the wild animals, as he had done on the bear which he dislodged from its den, and they would obey him. Thus, seeing a bear licking up the blood of a stag which a pack of wolves had run down, he forbade it to tear and devour it, till one of the brothers had taken off the skin for shoes for the community. On another occasion, the brother minister having found a bear eating their store of fruit, he bade the brother divide the fruit into two parts and give one to the bear, forbidding it to touch more than its own share. On this and all similar occasions the wild beasts respected his commands, they and the birds of prey often gathering round some dead

animal, but not venturing to touch it till he gave them leave to do so.

As time passed on, not only did crowds flock to receive S. Columban's blessing, but many novices joined his community, so that he was compelled to look out for a site on which to build another monastery. By the help of Agnoald, a Frank noble, he obtained from Gontram⁹ another ruined Roman castle, called Luxeuil. It was situated on the confines of the kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy, at the foot of the Vosges mountains. All this district, sixty leagues in length and from ten to fifteen in breadth, since known as Franche Comté, then consisted of parallel chains of inaccessible mountains, covered by impenetrable forests and intersected by rapid torrents, which formed the rivers Doubs, Dessoubre, and Loue. The barbarian invasions had destroyed the Roman towns, exterminated the population, and reduced the whole region to the state of a desert wilderness, inhabited by wild beasts alone¹.

On the spot which Columban selected for the site of the monastery, were still to be seen the ruins of magnificent baths, erected over the hot springs, for which the place had been famous; and in the neighboring forest were found the statues of Pagan gods and the ruins of their temples. The monastery quickly rose from its foundations, and the adjoining ground was cleared and converted into arable land by the labor of

⁹ Vit. S. Agil. c. ii. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 303.

¹ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix. c. ii.

the monks. But still the number of postulants went on increasing. The hard life and stern discipline, far from repelling the barbarians, proved attractive to them. For they roused the best part of their old German nature, and made them feel, that in devoting themselves to the loving service of the Eternal, Omnipotent King, and to the combat with themselves and the wild nature around them, they were entering on a career truly worthy of free and immortal men. Frank and Burgundian nobles came to Columban, and meekly resigning their long locks, the proud badges of their freedom, mingled with the ignoble herd of serfs and slaves, and begged humbly to be received as their brothers. Others brought their sons to obtain Columban's blessing, or to be trained as monks, or to be educated in the school which he had established in the monastery; and it was noticed that all the children whom he blessed, persevered in the practice of virtue to the hour of their death, and many of them became great saints, as will hereafter be told².

One of the children now given to the monastery was Agilus, the only son of Agnoald and his wife Deuteria, a noble Burgundian lady. It happened one day that Columban visiting them at one of their villas, they brought their son and heir, who was seven years old, to receive his blessing. After blessing him, Columban told them that this child was predestined to lead many into the way of salvation, and he therefore exhorted them to offer him to be brought up in the monastery,

² Vit. S. Agil. c. iii.

so that he might become the heir of God and fellow-heir with Christ. This child was the joy of their lives, the most prized of all their possessions. Notwithstanding, responding to Columban's exhortations, they vowed him to God, and laid him before the altar of Luxeuil, adding to this precious gift, other rich donations to the monastery.

As the community thus went on increasing, Columban found it necessary to build another monastery at no great distance. He chose for its site a place in which were many springs and ornamental pieces of water, in consequence of which he gave it the name of Fontaines. He also built a monastery at Annegray, where had stood the rude huts, which he and his Irish monks had erected on their first entrance into this forest wilderness. Over each of the three abbeys he placed an abbot, keeping the superintendence of the whole in his own hands. The monks occupied themselves, as was the custom of the Irish convents, in praying, teaching, and agricultural labor; and as their number increased, Columban established the *Laus Perennis*, alternate choirs keeping up the service of prayer and praise without cessation night or day. He also wrote for his monks a rule, which was very celebrated in his own day, and has since been the subject of much animadversion, especially in contrast with the rule of S. Benedict.

The rule of S. Columban, like that of S. Benedict, imposed much more manual labor and study than was required of the monks of the Thebaid and the East;

but its distinctive features were its inflexible severity, and total disregard of all human infirmities. Obedience was to be carried even to the sacrifice of life; poverty, to the total forgetfulness of all earthly things; and purity, to such perfection, that its infraction was deemed impossible and was not even provided for. "The monk must live," says the rule², "under the law of one alone, and in the company of many; that he may learn humility from the first, and patience from the others. He must not do what he wishes. He must eat what he is ordered: possess only what is given him: obey him whom he dislikes. He must not go to bed till he is exhausted; he must fall asleep as soon as he lies down; and he must rise before he has slept enough. Should he suffer an injury, he must be silent. He must fear his superior as he does God, and must love him as his father. He must not judge the decisions of his elders; his duty is to obey and to keep the commandments, according to the words of Moses, 'Listen, Israel, and be silent.'" No provision was made for varieties of circumstances, of dispositions, or of physical temperament. The fast was perpetual, and the food scanty, without any indulgence being allowed in illness or old age. Silence was never to be broken. The authority of the abbot was despotic and unchecked; and all infractions of the rule, however slight, were punished severely with blows. The severity of this rule for monks was intentional, and did not arise from

² Regula S. Columb. Biblioth. Pat. t. xii. Rettberg, ii. 678.
Ap. Ozanam, Civil. Chrét. c. iv. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. Præf.

any ignorance of the spiritual life ; for in the Penitentials which S. Columban drew up for the secular clergy and laity, a much lower degree of perfection was required from the secular clergy, and a still lower from the laity, a corresponding gradation of punishment being awarded to each. On the whole, the rule dealt more in general maxims than definite practices, and thus it had a certain vagueness, which made its observance dependent in great measure on the fervor of the monks, instead of stimulating and helping them in the practice of virtue.

Columban lost no opportunity of giving his sons lessons of obedience and confidence in God. One day going to the granary at Luxeuil, he found it almost empty ; whereupon Winnoc, a priest who was with him, was dismayed, wondering how so many were to be fed. But Columban answered, "Those who serve their Creator rightly will never want, as the Psalmist says, 'I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread³.' He who fed five thousand with five loaves, can easily fill our granary." And the next morning the granary was found to be full, though the monk who had charge of the keys declared that they had not been out of his possession.

Another day at Fontaines there were only two loaves and a little beer for the dinner of all the community ; but Columban raising his eyes to heaven, said, "Lord Jesus, the only hope of the world, who didst feed five thousand men in the desert with five

³ Ps. xxxvi. 25.

loaves, multiply these loaves and this beer." Then all began to eat and drink, and each had as much as he wished for, and many fragments remained.

At one time when the harvest was ripe, it happened that all the monks at Luxeuil were confined to bed with fever. But Columban ordered them to rise and go to reap, saying that work would refresh their weary limbs. All, with few exceptions, obeyed, and to their great surprise they found themselves cured. But those who had not obeyed, continued ill for many months, and scarcely escaped death.

At another time when the harvest ought to have been cut, the rain poured down with such violence that the monks could not go out to reap it. Notwithstanding, Columban bade them take their reaping hooks and follow him. He placed at the four corners of the field four monks, on whose faith and piety he could rely, and he made them begin to reap while the rest followed them. As the four monks advanced with their work the rain ceased, as if retreating before them, and the sun began to shine; and thus through their faith and obedience the harvest was saved.

CHAPTER V.

S. COLUMBAN.

WHILE all was thus prospering within Columban's monasteries, storms from without were gathering round him. His patron, S. Gontram, died A.D. 593, and left the kingdom of Burgundy to his nephew Childebert, son of Sigebert and Brunehaut. Childebert dying A.D. 596, his dominions devolved to his two sons, Austrasia falling to Theodebert, who was ten years of age, and Burgundy to Thierry, who was only nine; and during their minority their grandmother, Brunehaut, governed in their names. At this time Neustria was ruled by Fredegonde in the name of her son, Clotaire II., who was only twelve years old; but on her death the following year, Clotaire took the government into his own hands.

For several years Columban enjoyed the favor of Brunehaut and the young king Thierry, to whose kingdom Luxeuil belonged. Thierry often came to the abbey, and Columban gained influence over him. But unhappily this influence stood in the way of Brunehaut's private ambition; for while Columban tried to

persuade the young king to marry and lead a moral life, she, wishing to retain her own power over him, prevented his doing so, and encouraged him in every kind of licentiousness. The opposition of Columban greatly irritated her, and at last circumstances occurred which brought matters to a crisis.

One day Columban going to visit her at the royal villa of Bourcheresse, she brought Thierry's five illegitimate children to receive his blessing. On seeing them he asked what they wanted with him. "They are the king's sons," answered Brunehaut, "strengthen them with thy blessing." "They will never hold the regal sceptre," replied Columban, "because they are not rightly born." In great fury she ordered the children to go away; and from this time her animosity had no bounds. She began by sending an order to Columban's monasteries, forbidding the monks to go beyond the limits of their own domains, and ordering that no one should receive them or give them alms. Columban hoping to improve matters through his influence with Thierry, went to the royal villa of Epoisses, where the court then was; but in obedience to the queen's orders he did not go in. When Thierry heard that he was at the gate, he bade his servants prepare food as for his own table, and take it out to him. But Columban being told that the dishes were sent him by the king, turned from them with disgust, saying, "It is written, 'The Most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked'." It is not fitting that the mouths of the

¹ Ecclus. xxxiv. 23.

servants of God should be defiled by the food of him who closes to them, not only his own house, but the houses of others." As he spoke, the dishes and cups broke to pieces, the wine and beer were spilt on the ground, and the food was scattered about. Terrified at this sight, the servants rushed to tell the king and queen what had happened. Whereupon Thierry and Brunehaut, in great alarm, hastened to Columban and besought his pardon, promising amendment for the future. Columban, satisfied with their professions, returned to his monastery. But their promises were not long remembered. Brunehaut soon resumed her enmity, and Thierry returned to his licentious mode of life. Whereupon Columban wrote to Thierry, reproving him in the strongest terms and threatening him with excommunication.

Not content with exerting the royal power to persecute Columban, Brunehaut stirred up the bishops against him. He had lived among them in peace and honor for twelve years; but now, at Brunehaut's instigation², they began to object to his peculiar Irish customs, especially to his time of celebrating Easter, and the exclusion of all externs, men as well as women, from the cloisters of his monasteries. Several Gallic Councils between A.D. 511 and A.D. 558, had given the bishops in Gaul absolute authority over abbots and monks, even ordering abbots to present themselves from time to time before their respective bishops, to receive

² Jonas of Bobbio assigns this origin to the dispute between S. Columban and the French bishops.

advice, or reproof, as might be necessary³. Such enactments were contrary, not only to the custom of the Irish Church⁴, but also to the spirit of monastic life; and therefore Columban did not readily bow to the authority of the Burgundian bishops. He was probably strengthened in his assertion of independence by the fact, that the rules of S. Molua of Clonfert, and of his own old abbot, S. Comgall of Bangor, had recently been approved by S. Gregory the Great, who on reading the former, had said, "The saint who composed this rule, has truly guarded his disciples even to the very threshold of heaven⁵." He must also have known that S. Gregory had established the general principle of abbatial independence, by freeing the Benedictine Order from all jurisdiction, except that of the Holy See. But, unhappily, Columban had not fol-

³ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. vii. c. ii.

⁴ One of the peculiarities of the early Irish Church was, that having adapted itself to the civil divisions of society, the bishops had, properly speaking, no dioceses or territorial jurisdiction, but exercised episcopal functions in their clan or monastic family, often in subjection to the abbot, or even the abbess, or lay chieftain (Todd, *S. Patrick*, pp. 5, 43; Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. iii. c. iv). Some of the great abbeys in France, e.g. S. Denis, Lob, and S. Martin at Tours, were privileged to have a bishop of their own, who was either the abbot, or under obedience to him, and had jurisdiction over the subjects of the abbey and pilgrims. The monastery of Mount Sinai had its own bishop; the Bishop of Aquino was subject to the Abbot of Monte Cassino; and Martene and Durand mention, that in most of the large Benedictine abbeys the abbot or one of the monks was a bishop, and refer this custom to S. Benedict's being unwilling that the monks should ever leave the monastery, or be disturbed by the occasional presence of bishops within the abbey to hold ordinations. *Thesaur. Nov. Anecd.* t. i. Præf. Todd, pp. 51, 67. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii.* t. i. Præf. c. xxxv.

⁵ Moran, *Essays on the Early Irish Church*, p. 148.

lowed the example of S. Patrick and so many of his disciples, and gone to Rome to seek the apostolic authority for his work; and this inadvertence placed him at a disadvantage in his present contest.

In defence of his national custom he addressed to a council of bishops, a letter, which was marked by the freedom and impetuosity of his spirit, and was calculated to irritate, rather than to soothe animosity. In it he pointed out how different were the rules that belonged to secular and to religious life, and he exhorted the bishops to turn their attention to many other canons of the Church, besides Easter, which were grievously infringed, to hold councils more frequently notwithstanding the difficulties of travelling, to promote union between the secular and regular clergy, and before they condemned him and drove him away, to remember that many follow the broad way, and that if there be a few who direct their steps towards the narrow gate which leads to eternal life, it would be better to encourage them than to stop them, lest they themselves should fall under the condemnation, "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter⁶." But bold as were his reproofs to these bishops, who had made themselves the tools of a wicked queen, there are other passages in the letter which redeem its faults, and

⁶ Matt. xxiii. 13.

shew that he was actuated only by a pure spirit of zeal and charity. "I am not," says he, "the originator of this difference. I came a poor stranger into these foreign lands for the cause of Christ the Saviour, our common God and Lord. One thing alone I ask of your Holinesses, namely, that I may be allowed to live in silence in these forests, beside the bones of my seventeen brothers who are dead, and to pray for you as we are bound to do, and as we have done during the twelve years that we have dwelt among you. Let us live together in Gaul, as we shall live together in heaven, if we merit to enter there. The commands of our Lord and His Apostles are our canons. These are our arms, our shield, and our sword. These have made us leave our native land; it is these that we strive, though with lukewarmness, to observe here; and in these we desire to persevere, as we see our superiors do. . . It is for you, holy fathers, to consider what you will do with these poor veterans and aged foreigners. . . But I confess to you the secrets of my conscience, that I have great faith in the traditions of my native land. . . The rules of clerics and monks are different, and widely apart from each other. Let each observe faithfully the profession that he has made, but let all follow the Gospel and Christ their head. . . As for the rest, fathers, pray for us, as we, though sinners, pray for you, and do not repulse us as aliens: for all of us, whether Gauls, Bretons, Spaniards, or whatever our nation, are fellow-members of one Body. . . . Pardon the loquacity and boldness of one who is laboring beyond

his strength, most patient and most holy fathers and brethren'."

This dispute about the Irish observance of Easter, of which more will be heard in the following pages, had no connexion with the Quartodeciman heresy. It arose entirely out of an erroneous cyclical computation, which had formerly prevailed throughout Christendom. The Church of Alexandria was the first to discover the error; and, consequently, the Eastern Churches rectified their calculations in the fifth century, and Rome and the Western about the middle of the sixth. But the Irish and British Christians were not aware of this correction of the cycle, and therefore Columban clung tenaciously to the tradition which S. Patrick had brought from Rome, feeling confident that in so doing, he was following the actual custom of the Apostolic See. When the French bishops assured him of his mistake, he acted on the true Catholic instinct, and in obedience to S. Patrick's canon, laid the question before the Pope, S. Gregory the Great. No trace of this correspondence is to be found in S. Gregory's letters, and only one letter out of four which Columban wrote, is now extant, the three first having been lost, as he says in the fourth, "through Satan's intervention." This last letter not only contains the appeal on the disputed question, but also expresses in strong terms his love and veneration for the Vicar of Christ.

⁷ Ep. ii. Galland. Bibl. Patr. t. xii. p. 341. Ap. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix. c. ii.

"These questions," he writes, "would I have put to thee in person, were it not that my weak health and solicitude for my pilgrim companions, kept me fast at home, although I was anxious to go to thee, that I might drink of that spiritual vein of the living water of knowledge flowing down from heaven, and springing up into eternal life. And if the body would follow the mind, Rome should once again put up with a slight upon herself; just as we read in the narrative of the learned Jerome, how certain men, many years ago went to Rome from the furthest limits of the Heuline shore, and, wonderful to relate, searched in Rome for something beyond Rome itself. Just so would it be with me. I should eagerly seek out thee, not minding Rome, save in that reverence which is due to the ashes of the saints⁸."

No answer was received to this appeal, which was probably made about the time of S. Gregory's death. Another council of bishops was held, and renewed the attack on Columban. He therefore made another attempt to obtain the decisive judgment of Rome, and wrote thus to Pope Boniface III. "To thee alone do we pour out our supplications, through our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, and through the unity of faith which is common to us; that thou mayest bestow upon us, laboring pilgrims, the solace of thy holy decision, with which thou wilt strengthen the tradition of our elders, if it be not contrary to faith;

⁸ Galland. Bibl. Patr. xii. 346. The text of this letter is very corrupt. This translation is from Moran, p. 102.

that thus we may, during our pilgrimage, be enabled through thy adjudication to keep the rite of Easter as it was handed down to us by our fathers⁹." But before Pope Boniface's answer arrived, Columban was beyond the jurisdiction of the Burgundian bishops. There is, however, reason to believe, that after his removal to Italy he discovered his mistake¹ about the Roman custom, and corrected his practice; for no more is heard of this controversy either at Bobbio or his other monasteries, or in those founded by his disciples. Nay, even when some years later, Agrestius, a turbulent monk, renewed against S. Eustasius², S. Columban's successor at Luxeuil, the old accusation that the customs in his abbey were unknown to other churches, the charge which he brought before the Council of Mâcon, A.D. 624, made no reference to the Paschal question, but only to the peculiar Irish tonsure, the signing of the cross by the monks on their spoons before eating, and on their foreheads in going in or out of a house or room, and similar trifles.

While this dispute with the bishops had been going on, Brunehaut's enmity to Columban had become more and more bitter, till at last she prevailed on the weak,

⁹ Galland. *Bibl. Patr.* p. 349. Ap. Moran, p. 154.

¹ Such is Mabillon's opinion. Hefele's words are: "It is not known if his messenger reached Rome. Only this much is certain, that he kept to his own custom, as is plain from his letter to his brethren at Luxeuil from Nantes. It is, however, also plain, that in spite of it he continued in close union with the Roman Church." *History of the Introduction of Christianity into South Germany*, p. 268.

² Vit. S. Eustas. c. vi.—xvi. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii.* p. 110.

young king to proceed to extremities against the audacious foreigner. Thierry, accordingly, went to Luxeuil, and asked why the customs of the province were infringed by the exclusion of Christians from the interior of the abbey. Columban explained, that though it was not his custom to admit secular and lay persons into the monks' cloister, he had prepared fitting lodgings where all were hospitably entertained. But Thierry insisted that all should be admitted to all parts of the abbey, otherwise he would withdraw his gifts. Columban answered, "If thou attemptest to violate our regular discipline, we want not thy gifts. And if thou comest hither to destroy this monastery, or to infringe its rules, know that thy kingdom will speedily come to ruin, and all thy race will perish." While Thierry had been speaking, he had advanced into the monks' refectory; but, alarmed at Columban's prophetic words, he quickly retraced his steps. Then Columban reproached and threatened him in strong terms. But Thierry replied, "Thou hopest that I will give thee the martyr's crown. I am not so mad as to commit such a crime. But if thou thinkest fit to separate thyself from all seculars, thou must return on the road by which thou camest hither." All the nobles cried out with one accord, that they would not have him in the country if he would not associate with all. But Columban declared that he would not quit the monastery, unless he were driven out by force.

Thierry on his departure left behind him one of his nobles, with orders to carry Columban prisoner to

Besançon. This was accordingly done, and a guard was set round the abbey to prevent the monks holding communication with him.

In this painful state of blockade the monks bethought them of sending Agilus, the son of Agnoald, to intercede for them with Brunehaut and Thierry. Agilus, who was now above twenty years of age, willingly undertook the mission. But he had scarcely left the abbey, when he fell into the hands of the nephew of Wandelin, Duke of Sequania, who being about to strike him, he raised up his crucifix in his own defence, at sight of which his assailant's arm became suddenly paralyzed. Then the unhappy young soldier fell on his face before the youthful monk, and besought him to have mercy on him. For three hours the saintly Agilus prayed and wept; and at the end of that time he obtained the miraculous cure of his late foe. But meanwhile, God's grace had worked even a greater miracle within the young soldier's soul; for touched with contrition for his past life, he threw off his military dress, and clothing himself in the habit of Christ's soldier, received the tonsure, and became a monk of Luxeuil³. The fame of this miracle preceded Agilus, and secured him an honorable reception at court. Brunehaut and Thierry, with the strange impulsiveness of the Merovingian race, prostrated themselves before him, humbly asked his pardon for the crimes that they had committed against the servants

³ Vita S. Agili, 7, 8. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 305.

of God, sent him back laden with gifts for the abbey, and henceforth left the monks in peace.

But their enmity against Columban remained as before. At Besançon he was very well treated. The miracles that he worked gained him universal respect; the people repudiated all share in the sins of the court; no restraint was placed upon him; and he was allowed to go whithersoever he would. Left thus at liberty, he happened one day to climb the precipitous hill on which the town was built, and on reaching its summit, he looked down over the wall of rock, at the base of which flowed the river Doubs. The road to his beloved Luxeuil lay open before him, and there was none to hinder his return. He gazed at his home till midday. Then his resolution was taken. With bold steps he descended the hill, and following the well-known path, he entered the abbey, and stood in the midst of his children.

When Brunehaut and Thierry heard that Columban had returned, they were greatly infuriated and sent an officer with a body of soldiers to carry him back to Besançon. When these men arrived, he was sitting in the church reading. They entered and looked for him both in the church and in the cloister; but, as had happened in many similar cases during the Pagan persecutions, their eyes were blinded; and though they passed close to him they could not see him till they got outside, when the officer looking through the window, perceived him within, reading quietly. Then acknowledging the power of God, the officer said, "How

can we find him whom the arm of God conceals? Let us hasten back to the king, and tell him that we could not find him."

Again Brunehaut and Thierry sent two of their counts to search for him. When they came to the abbey they found him in the choir with his monks; and they earnestly besought him to obey the king and return to his own country. But he answered, "I left my native land for the love of Christ, and I do not think it is the will of my Creator that I should return thither." Hereupon the counts, seeing that he was not disposed to obey, went away, leaving behind them the most ferocious of their party to carry out the king's orders by force. But even these fierce men did not dare to lay their hands on Columban. They knelt round him, weeping, some clasping his knees, others hanging on his cloak, and all entreating him to have pity on them, to forgive what they did, not by their own wish but in obedience to the king; for if they did not compel him to go away, they would themselves be put to death. Then Columban, who had hitherto been inflexible, was touched with compassion for these poor men, and to save them he consented to depart.

As he crossed the threshold and left the abbey, all his monks followed him, weeping and wailing, as in a funeral procession. Looking anxiously on this multitude, whom he should have to feed in his wanderings, he prayed, "Eternal Creator of all things, provide what is needful for Thy people, who serve Thee in Thy

church." And he consoled them, bidding them place their trust in God, because this trouble, far from being their ruin or his, would lead only to the increase of the community.

But soon there came an order from the court that only the Irish monks were to be allowed to go. Then it was heartrending to witness the sorrow of both Columban and his children. Many of the monks had to be torn from him by violence, among whom was Eustasius his personal attendant, who afterwards became Abbot of Luxeuil.

The escort led Columban and his Irish monks to Besançon, and thence to Autun and Avallon, and along the course of the rivers Cure and Yonne to Auxerre and Nevers, at which last place they embarked on the Loire. The soldiers were rough, stern men, and behaved harshly to the monks, making them walk like prisoners in the middle of their ranks, and not allowing them to loiter or go along at their own pace. As they were getting rather slowly into the boat at Nevers, one of the soldiers struck Lux, a very holy monk, with an oar. At which sight Columban exclaimed, "Cruel man, why dost thou add to my sorrow? Hast thou not already committed crimes enough for thine own ruin? Why art thou harsh with the meek, and ferocious with the gentle? Why dost thou strike the weary members of Christ? Mark, the vengeance of God will overtake thee on this spot, on which thou hast raged against Christ's members." When this soldier on his return was

drowned at this very place, men remembered Columban's words.

In the same prophetic spirit Columban said to the captain of the escort, "Remember that within three years thou wilt have for thy lord Clotaire, whom thou now despisest." The other answered, "Why dost thou say this to me?" And Columban replied, "Thou wilt see what I have said, if thou art then alive."

On arriving at Orleans two of the monks went into the town to procure food, but they found all the houses, and even the churches, shut against them by the king's order. At last they met a Syrian woman who took them to her house, and gave them all that they wanted, saying, "I also am a stranger, for I come from the far distant, sunny East." In return for her charity Columban restored sight to her blind husband. He worked many other miracles during his journey; but though the people were greatly moved by them, they did not venture, from fear of the court, to show openly their veneration for him.

At Tours the soldiers would not stop to allow their prisoners to visit the tomb of S. Martin, till the current drove the boat on shore, and thus compelled them to land. Columban spent the whole night at the saint's tomb; and the next morning the bishop took him and his monks to his house, and entertained them hospitably, for they were in great need of rest.

As they sat at table the bishop asked Columban why he was returning to his own country, when he answered, "That dog Thierry has driven me from my

brethren." There happened to be among the guests one of Thierry's leudes, who said in a low voice, "Is it not better to give people milk than gall to drink?" Whereupon Columban answered, "I see that thou wishest to keep thy oath of fealty to King Thierry. Thou wilt therefore be glad to be the bearer of a message to him from me. Go then and tell him, that within three years he and his children will perish, and his race will be rooted out by God." The other replied, "Servant of God, why dost thou foretell such things?" And Columban rejoined, "I cannot be silent about what God has commissioned me to declare."

On their arrival at Nantes the Bishop and the Count who governed the place, hired a vessel to convey Columban and his monks to Ireland. While waiting to embark, he wrote a parting letter to his children at Luxeuil. After gazing at that impetuous, fearless old man, defying monarchs boldly in God's service, it is pleasant to reverse the picture, and to listen to the tender effusions of that loving Irish heart. His letter is addressed, "To his sweetest sons, to his dearest scholars, to his brethren in poverty, to all the monks together, Columban the sinner." He sometimes speaks to the community, and at others to Attalus, one of the monks, whom he had appointed to fill his own place as their head. He seems to have so much to say that he knows not how to express the whole, or how to leave off writing. "Keep Waldelin⁴," he writes, "if he be

⁴ Doubtless this was the young soldier who had just been converted by Agilus, and who could not yet have been professed as a monk.

still with you. May God bless him and make him humble. And give him for me the kiss that I could not give him myself. . . . And thou, my most beloved Attalus, what does it profit to have one body, if there be not one heart?" He gives many directions to promote discipline and harmony within the cloister, exhorts all his sons to be courageous, strong-minded, patient, and, above all, loving and united. Foreseeing that many monasteries would be founded by his sons, he says, "Go to the situations which will suit you, where God will build with you. Go forth and increase, you and the thousands of souls who will be born of you." Drawing towards a close, his grief bursts forth, but he checks it, supporting both himself and them by noble words of hope and courage. "At first I wished to write a letter full of sadness and tears, but knowing thy heart, and how thou art overwhelmed with necessary cares and troubles, I changed my style, wishing rather to dry than to excite thy tears. . . . And now my own tears flow. But I must dry them, for it ill becomes a soldier to weep. After all, what has happened to us is nothing uncommon. . . . Was there not in old times a philosopher wiser than his fellows, who was put in prison, because he said, in opposition to them, that there was only one God? The Gospels are full of the same thing, and were written chiefly to teach the Gospel truth, that Christ's disciples must follow Him, bearing their cross. . . . There is great danger to the flesh; but forget not the strength of the enemy, the greatness of the glory, and the freedom of our choice. Without

an enemy there would be no fight; without a fight there would be no crown; without freedom of choice there would be no honor. . . . While I write they come to tell me that the ship is ready—that ship which is to bear me, against my will, to my native land. . . . The end of my parchment obliges me to conclude. Love has no order; therefore my letter is confused, I wished to say every thing, and I could not. . . . Pray for me, my bowels, that I may live to God⁵.”

The ship being ready the monks embarked. But though the wind was fair, it was found impossible to get the vessel out of the port, and in spite of all the efforts of the sailors, she drove on shore. Here she remained high and dry for three days, by which time the captain's patience was exhausted; and having made up his mind that the monks were the cause of his detention, he forced them to disembark.

Thus repelled both by land and by sea, Columban turned his steps towards Neustria. Clotaire received him very graciously, and wished to keep him in his dominions. But Columban declined his liberal offers, because he still hoped to appease Brunehaut, or should he fail to do so, he would go to some more distant country. A dispute had arisen between Thierry and Theodebert about their frontier, and both sent ambassadors to Clotaire to ask his aid. He consulted Columban as to which side he should espouse; but Columban advised him to keep aloof from both, because within three

⁵ Ep. iv. Galland. xii. p. 349. Ap. Moines d'Occident, t. ii. lib. ix. c. ii.

years both kingdoms would fall into his hands. Clotaire followed his advice and maintained his neutrality.

After some time Columban proceeded into Austrasia. As he passed along, the Neustrian and Austrasian nobles brought their children for his blessing, for his influence was as great over them as over the Burgundians. Theodebert received him as cordially as Clotaire had done, and made him liberal offers of land and all else that he could require. These he accepted, for having found that Brunehaut was implacable, he now proposed to settle himself on the eastern frontier of Austrasia, whence he could go and preach to the Pagans.

He accordingly set out to search for some suitable place for his new home; and on reaching the Rhine, he embarked and went up it. His party must now have been a large one; for in addition to the Irish monks, there were also Eustasius and several others from Luxueil, who had contrived to make their escape across the frontier and rejoin him. Among the Irish monks was Gall, the son of an Irish king of the same family as the great S. Bridget⁶. He had been trained by Columban from his childhood, and had grown old under his rule. He was not inferior to his saintly master in humility and fortitude, in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and in the ardent desire to give up all earthly things, and follow Jesus in obedience, poverty, and the loving pursuit of lost souls⁷.

⁶ *Genealogia S. Gall.* Pertz, *Monumenta*, ii. p. 34.

⁷ *Vit. S. Gall.* Pertz, ii. p. 5.

On their arrival at Mayence, the boatmen went on shore, hoping to procure provisions from the friends whom they had in the town. But after some time they returned, and said that their friends had failed them. Then Columban said, "Let me go to my friend." Whereupon the boatmen wondered how he could have a friend in a place in which he had never before been. However they put him on shore, when he went to the church, and prostrating himself on the pavement, prayed long and earnestly to God. While he still prayed the Bishop of Mayence came into the church, and asked who he was; and when Columban told him that he was a pilgrim, he bade him go to his house, where all that he required would be given him. Columban thanked him, and calling the boatmen, they went to the good bishop's house and received an abundant supply of food.

From the Rhine they passed through the Aar and the Limmat to the Lake of Zurich, and took up their abode at Tuggen. They were now in the district inhabited by the Suevi and Allemanni; for the latter, after their defeat by Clovis at Tolbiac, had recrossed the Rhine, and mingling with the Suevi, were now spread over Swabia and Switzerland. In this region a few remnants of the old Roman Christianity were still to be found, but the population was for the most part Pagan.

Columban applied himself with ardor to the conversion of these Pagans; and Gall having learned the Allemanian dialect, was of great assistance to him in preaching. At one place they found a party of Suevi brewing beer for a festival of Woden, which they were

about to celebrate. Columban being told what was the object of the brewing, blew upon the caldron, and instantly it split into pieces, and the beer ran out upon the ground. The Pagans awe-struck at the power of one, who could thus break a copper vessel with a single breath, were easily induced to listen to his preaching; and many of them were converted and baptized.

But the monks were not always so successful. In another place Gall burned one of their shrines, and threw their idols into the lake; whereupon the people rose in fury, tried to kill him, and drove Columban and the others away with blows and insults^s. After some little stay at Tuggen, they found the people so malicious and cruel, and so devoted to Pagan superstitions, that despairing of their conversion, they resolved to pass further on.

They accordingly removed to Arbou on the Lake of Constance, where they were received joyfully by Willimar, a priest who lived there. As they sat at table, Gall, at Columban's desire, spoke with such eloquence on the love of Christ and the joys of heaven, that Willimar was moved to tears, and wondered what sort of men he had got under his roof.

They spent some days with Willimar, and then at his recommendation, crossed the lake to Bregenz on its opposite shore, where they remained a considerable time. There were at Bregenz three brass images covered with gold, representing the three

^s Vit. S. Gall. Pertz, ii. p. 7.

principal Pagan gods, in honor of whom a great festival was celebrated soon after their arrival. When a great multitude was assembled Gall preached to them with touching eloquence, telling them about the one only God and Creator, and Jesus Christ, who had become man and had died to open the kingdom of heaven to them ; and as he ceased speaking, he fearlessly dashed down the idols, and breaking them to pieces, threw them into the lake. Hereupon some of the people, moved by the thought of God's love, confessed their sins and were baptized ; while others were exasperated, and went away in a rage.

Meanwhile the monks carried out their rule in its greatest strictness. They had discovered a ruined church, dedicated to S. Aurelia, which they cleared out, and sprinkling it with holy water, restored it to its original purpose. They chanted the office at the stated hours by day and night, observed a perpetual fast, and depended for their support on roots and herbs, on the wild birds they could trap, and the fish caught by Gall with nets made by Columban.

One night as Gall sat in his boat watching his nets in silence, he heard the demon of the mountain call to the demon of the lake. And the latter answered, "Here I am." Then the mountain spirit cried, "Come to my aid. Behold the strangers who have turned me out of my temple are here. Come, come, help me to drive them out of this land." But the spirit of the lake answered, "Little would my help avail ! There is one of them now on the water, whom I can never manage

to injure. I have often tried to break his nets, but have always failed. He prays without ceasing, and never sleeps; and he is ever protected by the holy sign." On hearing this conversation Gall, making the sign of the cross, cried aloud, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to quit this place, without daring to hurt any one." Then he ran to waken Columban, who instantly rang the bell for the night office. And as the solemn chant began to float over the lake, and rose to the mountain summits, there was heard around the howling of the demons, first raging furiously, then gradually retreating, and at last dying away in the distance, like the confused voices of a routed army.

About this time Columban, leaving his monks at Bregenz, went to Theodebert, to make a last effort to save him from the ruin that hung over his head. This unhappy young prince led the same dissolute life as the rest of his race. His grandmother⁹ had induced him in his youth to marry Bilchilda, a slave, whom he killed in order to take another wife. He and his brother Thierry, both of them fierce, proud men¹, were constantly quarrelling, and now they were at open war. Columban tried to persuade Theodebert to conquer his pride, to avert the impending judgments of God by becoming a monk, and thus to gain eternal life by giving up his earthly kingdom. But Theodebert and his leudes treated the proposal with scorn; saying, "Who ever heard of a Merovingian at the

⁹ Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. ii.

¹ Vit. S. Columban, c. lvii. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 24.

height of his regal glory, voluntarily becoming a monk?" Whereupon Columban replied, "If he will not of his own free will accept the honor of the tonsure, he will soon receive it against his will."

Shortly after his return to Bregenz, Columban was one day sitting on the stump of a decayed oak, reading, and by his side was Chamoald, son of one of Theodebert's principal leudes, who had followed him from Meaux². As the saint read, he fell suddenly into a trance, and rapt in spirit he beheld the armies of Theodebert and Thierry engaged in a sanguinary battle on the field of Tolbiac. Soon coming to himself, he called Chamoald, and told him of the battle that was then being fought and the terrible carnage. Whereupon the young Austrasian said eagerly, "Father, help Theodebert with thy prayers, so that your common enemy, Thierry, may be vanquished." But Columban answered, "Thy advice is foolish, and contrary to the spirit of religion. Such is not the will of God, who bids us pray for our enemies. The just Judge will do to them both what He thinks fit." The young man afterwards found, that on this very day and at this hour, the battle of Tolbiac was fought, and Theodebert was defeated.

Three years had now elapsed since Columban had been driven from Luxeuil. He had tried to make a

² Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. ii. p. 517. Surius calls him Magnold, which was the name of the deacon who afterwards became a disciple of S. Gall; and Mabillon styles him Chaguwald. Vit. S. Columban, c. lvii.

new home for himself in various places, but without success. The Pagans of Bregenz were as obdurate and unfriendly as those of Tuggen had been. Not only would they often attack the monks with sticks and stones, but they refused to supply them with food, even when they were in the extremity of want. They complained to Duke Cunzon³, to whom the district belonged, that these strangers were driving away the game; whereupon the duke was very angry, and ordered the monks to depart. They also drove away two of the monks' cows, and killed two of the brethren who went in search of them.

When the dead bodies were brought to the church, Columban was greatly grieved, and said, "We have found in this land a cup of gold, but it is filled with poisonous serpents. Let our sorrow give place to confidence. The God whom we serve, will send His angel with us to lead us where we may find peace and love."

Revolving in his mind whither he should turn his footsteps, he felt a great desire to go to the Venetii or Wends, a Slave nation, who had settled in Styria and Carinthia⁴. But an angel appeared to him in a vision, and showing him a globe which represented the world, said to him, "Behold the whole world before thee. Choose thy way to the right or to the left, if thou wouldst reap the fruit of thy labors." Understanding from this that he was not to leave the German nations, he deter-

³ Vit. S. Gall. Pertz, ii. p. 8.

⁴ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix. c. ii.

mined to go and preach to the Lombards in Italy. He therefore sent Eustasius, Chamoald, and many other monks to Luxeuil and elsewhere, and prepared to take Gall and a few others with himself.

But when the day fixed for their departure arrived, Gall was very ill with fever, and declared himself unequal to the journey. Then Columban, fancying that he who had hitherto been the most spirited of his disciples, was giving way to self-indulgence, said to him, "I know, brother, that it is hard for thee to be wearied in laboring for me. But if thou wilt separate from me, I forbid thee to say Mass so long as I live."

Thus the old friends parted, and Columban crossed the Alps into Lombardy. He met with a cordial reception from Agilulf, the Lombard king, who had been converted from Arianism by his queen Theodolinda, a Bavarian princess, and S. Gregory the Great. Agilulf gave him a tract of land, called Bobbio, situated in a defile of the Apennines, near the river Trebbia. It was remarkable for its beauty and fertility, and for the abundant supply of fish in the river. Columban found on it a half ruined church, dedicated to S. Peter. This he repaired, and adjoining it he built a monastery, which was soon filled with monks. Notwithstanding his advanced age, he took his part in the labor of erecting these buildings; and the inhabitants of the surrounding country would often be amazed to behold his giant form, crossing precipices, and ascending inaccessible mountain heights, bearing on his shoulders

enormous beams and trunks of trees, with what seemed to them supernatural strength.

His indefatigable zeal found ample scope in the conversion of the Arian Lombards, over whom he gained much influence; so that the Abbey of Bobbio became the stronghold of the faith in North Italy. He also established within the abbey a school, which was long very celebrated.

While Columban had wandered so far, and had found a new field of labor for our Lord's service, his predictions in France had been literally fulfilled. Theodebert having been defeated and taken prisoner by Thierry, was given up by him to Brunehaut, who had him tonsured as a monk, and afterwards put him to death. Thierry dying soon after, she placed Sigebert, one of his illegitimate sons, on the throne. The nobles, however, were weary of her rule, and offered the crown to Clotaire, who killed Sigebert and two of his brothers, and added both Austrasia and Burgundy to his Neustrian kingdom. Brunehaut, seated on a camel, was led round the army in triumph, and afterwards tied to the tail of a wild horse, which as it galloped along dashed her to pieces.

As soon as Clotaire was quietly installed in his new possessions, he bethought him of Columban, and wished to have him back again at Luxeuil. He therefore sent Eustasius, accompanied by several monks and nobles laden with rich gifts, to search for him. They tracked him to Bregenz, and thence to Bobbio. He was rejoiced to behold his sons again; but they

failed to persuade him to return to his old home. In his long wanderings he had simply followed God's guidance, and he would not now retrace his steps of his own accord. He therefore wrote to Clotaire, thanking him for his kind intentions, and recommending his sons to his favor and protection, a recommendation to which in after years Clotaire nobly responded. He committed the care of the Abbey of Luxeuil and all its dependencies to Eustasius, exhorting him to maintain regular discipline, union, and the love of God among the brethren, and to labor to spread the knowledge of Christ among the neighboring people.

When the Abbey of Bobbio was built and the community was duly established, the old longing for solitude came over Columban. He therefore chose out for himself a cave in the side of a rock, on the opposite bank of the River Trebbia, which he fitted up as a chapel of our Blessed Lady. To this he retired, as he had done to his cave at Annegray, giving himself up to prayer and penance, and going to the abbey only on Sundays and festivals. And here, after the lapse of a year, he expired on the 21st of November, A.D. 615.

CHAPTER VI.

S. COLUMBAN'S DISCIPLES.

BUT though S. Columban was dead, his spirit still lived in his disciples. Through them he may be said to have done more after his death than during his lifetime. The first of those who claims notice is S. Gall¹, whom he left ill at Bregenz.

As soon as Columban was gone, a great melancholy took possession of Gall. He therefore crossed the lake in his little boat, and threw himself on Willimar's charity. Willimar appointed two of his clerics, Magnold and Theodore, to take care of him during his illness, and through their tender nursing he was gradually restored to health.

When the fever had quite left him he longed for greater solitude; and he asked Hiltibold, a deacon, who also lived with Willimar, whether he knew of any lonely spot, where he could build himself a cell; "for," he added, "my soul is filled with an extreme desire to end my days on earth in solitude." Hiltibold answered,

¹ Vit. S. Gall. Anonym. Pertz, Monument. ii. p. 5. Vit. S. Gall. a Walufrid. Strab. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 215.

"My father, I know a desert enclosed by high mountains, but it is full of bears, wolves, and wild boars." "If the Lord is with us," replied Gall, "who will be against us? He who delivered Daniel in the den of lions, is Almighty, and can deliver me from the wild beasts."

Accordingly, early the next morning, Gall and Hiltibold set out, and as they walked along they prayed and chanted psalms. Thus they went on till three in the afternoon, when Hiltibold proposed that they should take some food; but Gall said that he would not eat till our Lord had showed him the place of his rest. They, therefore, walked on till they reached the spot where the river Steinach falls down in a cascade, and hollows out a basin in the rock. Here Gall, being rapt in prayer, caught his foot in the brambles and fell. Hiltibold ran to lift him, but he exclaimed, "Let me alone. This is the place of my rest for ever. Here I will take up my abode, because I have chosen it." Then he made a cross with branches of hazel, and set it up; and hanging on it the relics which he wore, they knelt down and prayed that God would make this wilderness a habitation for them. After this they took their evening meal, and lighting a fire to keep off the wild beasts, they lay down to sleep.

In the middle of the night Gall rose to pray; and as he prayed, a bear came down the mountain, prowling for food; whereupon he said to it, "In the name of the Lord, I command thee to bring some wood and throw it on the fire." The bear instantly obeyed, and fetching a log, threw it on the fire; in reward for

which service Gall gave him a piece of bread, saying, "In the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, depart from this valley. The mountains shall be in common between us and you, but only on condition that you injure neither us nor our flocks and herds." Then Hiltibold, who, feigning sleep, had been watching all that passed, threw himself at Gall's feet, exclaiming, "Now I know that God is with thee, since the beasts of the forest obey thee." But Gall quickly answered, "Beware that thou tellest no one till thou beholdest the glory of God."

The next day Hiltibold went to fish at the waterfall, where two demons appeared to him in the form of naked women, and threw stones at him, saying, "Why hast thou brought that terrible man, the implacable foe of our race, into this wilderness?" Hiltibold ran instantly to Gall, and when they had prayed that God would banish the demons, and sanctify the place to the honor of His name, they returned to the waterfall, and Gall said to the demons, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, I command you to retire into the desert, and to come here no more." Then they threw their nets into the stream; and as they fished, women's voices were heard in the mountains, weeping, and saying, "What shall we do? Whither shall we go? For this stranger will not let us dwell either among men, or in this wilderness." And afterwards, when Hiltibold was giving chase to a hawk, he heard them asking each other clamorously, whether the dreaded Christian was still in the forest.

After they had made a little cell for Gall he sent

Hiltibold back to Arbou, while he himself remained three days alone in the desert without any food. On the fourth day he went back to Willimar; and as they sat at table, Hiltibold said jokingly, "If the bear were here, perhaps Gall would bless him." Then Willimar asking what he meant, he told him what had happened in the forest. From this time they all revered Gall as a great saint. Magnoald and some of the other clerics became his disciples, and followed him into the forest, where, from day to day, they watched with wondering admiration the severe and holy life that he led.

Duke Cunzon, who had formerly been set against Columban by his Pagan subjects, was now in great trouble about his daughter, who was possessed by a devil; and he sent for Willimar to come and see her. Willimar tried to persuade Gall to accompany him; but Gall answered, "This work is thine, not mine. Go thou, father; for what have I to do with the prince of this world?" Then, fearing lest he should be compelled to go, he quitted his cell in the forest and set out with two of his disciples, as if he were going to rejoin his old master, Columban, in Italy. They crossed the mountain, and entered a wood called Sennwald, where, not far from the left bank of the Rhine, there was the village now called Grabs. Here they found a very holy deacon, John, who entertained them for some days, believing them to be pilgrims.

Meanwhile Willimar had gone to Duke Cunzon's court, where he found the young girl in a frightful

state, screaming, and calling on Gall, as if it were he who was tormenting her. He told the duke what a wonderful saint Gall was, and the duke immediately sent him back to fetch him. In vain did Willimar seek Gall in his cell; and it was only after long search through the whole country, that he at last found him, sitting, reading in a cave in the Sennwald. Gall was now forced to go, but shrinking from all worldly pomp, he declined the horse which the deacon John offered him for the journey, and set out for the court on foot. On his arrival he drove out the devil, and cured the girl. The duke in great joy gave him costly gifts, all of which he distributed among the poor, excepting only a silver chalice, beautifully chased, which he allowed Magnoald to retain for the use of their church. The duke also offered him the bishopric of Constance, which had lately fallen vacant; but he refused it, saying, "During the life of my master, Columban, I cannot say Mass."

The place which Gall had chosen for his abode was a fertile valley, covered with wood, lying between two rivers, and surrounded by hills. When he took possession of it, it was infested by serpents: but he banished them, and none were henceforth seen there. Here disciples gathered round him, and a regular community under the rule of S. Columban was formed. Among others was the deacon John, whom he invited to go with him through a course of theological study, which would enable him to be more useful to others. In the solemn stillness of that wild forest, seated on the ground or at the foot of some giant pine, Gall

would pour forth those treasures of theology, of divine philosophy, and the deep science of the spiritual life, which he had drawn from the Irish schools and his own study of the holy Scriptures; and so great was the grace that hung upon his lips, that "whatever John saw or heard, his heart apprehended," while at the same time "he constantly grew more and more in meekness and humility²." Thus was begun that school in the Abbey of S. Gall, which was afterwards so celebrated. A well-trodden path, too, was gradually made through the thicket by those who came to see Gall, to be cured or consoled by him, or to listen to the sweet words that fell from his lips. Even the fierce Pagans who had persecuted him and Columban, began to be softened, and many a barbarian convert was won by him to the love of Jesus and the glory of God.

Thus nearly three years passed away, and in this new family gathered round him Gall found consolation for the master and the brethren whom he had lost. But still there was a dreary blank in his heart; for during all these long years he had never had the joy of saying Mass.

At length at the end of November, A.D. 615, one morning at the break of dawn Gall woke Magnoald, and said, "Rise quickly and prepare the altar for me to say Mass." In amaze Magnoald exclaimed, "What is this, master? How canst thou say Mass?" But Gall replied, "This night after nocturns it was revealed to me that my master Columban was departed, and I

² Vit. S. Gall. Pertz, ii. p. 13.

would offer the sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of his soul." Then the bell was rung, and all the brethren flocked to the oratory, and many prayers were offered for Columban's soul, while Gall celebrated Mass. When Mass was over Gall said to Magnoald, "My son, let it not seem hard to thee if I ask thee to go quickly to the convent of Bobbio, to inquire about the last acts of my abbot, and note the day and hour of his death, and bring me word of all without delay." Magnoald was confounded, for he knew not the way, and it was moreover the depth of winter. But Gall said, "Go, brother, fear not, our Lord will direct thy steps." Thus encouraged Magnoald set out, and crossing the Alps amid frost and snow, he arrived safely at the Abbey of Bobbio. The monks of Bobbio gave him a letter containing a full account of Columban's acts and death, and also his staff, saying, "Our master while still alive, ordered us that by this staff Gall should be absolved." Great was Gall's joy at receiving this token of his beloved master's forgiveness. The staff was long preserved in the abbey as a precious relic, and S. Columban's soul was remembered in all the Masses and prayers of the community.

The following Easter Duke Cunzon assembled the clergy and laity of the province to elect a bishop for the see of Constance, which still continued vacant. When the synod had been opened with the usual solemnities, and the duke bade the bishops elect whom they would, all cried out with one voice, that none was so fitted for the bishopric as Gall, who was full of

wisdom, learned in the Scriptures, of great repute for his virtues, and a father to the poor, the widows, and the orphans. Then the duke said to Gall, "Hearest thou what they say?" And Gall answered, "They have spoken rightly if only it were true." He proceeded to explain that, in obedience to a letter of Pope Celestine II., he, being a foreigner, could not hold the bishopric³; but he recommended the deacon John, who was of the Allemanian race, and was well qualified for the office by his mature virtues and his spotless life. John was accordingly chosen, and at the Mass of consecration Gall preached. But as at that time the canons forbade a priest to preach in the presence of a bishop, Bishop John led Gall by the hand to the pulpit, and interpreted his words to the people, as was then the custom⁴. In this sermon, which is still extant⁵, Gall went through the whole Catholic faith from the creation and fall of man, to the Incarnation and Passion of God the Son, and the Sacraments of His love which ever abide in His Church. Such marvellous unction accompanied his eloquence, that all his hearers were moved to tears by the intensity of the heavenly desires with which he inspired them, and they returned to their homes filled with compunction for their past lives, and good resolutions for the future.

³ Vit. S. Gall. Pertz, ii. p. 13, note 24.

⁴ Ibid. p. 14, note 29.

⁵ Canis. i. p. 781. There seems at first sight a discrepancy between the date of S. Columban's death in November, A.D. 615, and John's subsequent election in Easter, A.D. 615. But, it must be remembered, that according to the Imperial indiction the year began on the 25th of September, and consequently the month of November preceded Easter.

Thirty years of life yet remained to S. Gall. He spent them in prayer and penance, practising the same austerities as in his youth, and thus training his aged body to an almost superhuman state of mortification. Miracles attended his words and acts, but he ever ascribed them to the merits of his companions and the loving mercy of God. Of all his virtues, his sweetness and humility were the most conspicuous.

On the death of S. Eustasius the community of Luxeuil chose S. Gall to succeed him, and sent six Irish monks to him with a letter to announce his election. But S. Gall said to them, "I left my family and my country for Christ, and shall I now accept the riches of this world? I am quite content with this solitude, in which no doubt or uncertainty disturbs the peace of my life."

The grace of the Apostolate of Allemania which was denied to S. Columban, was reserved for S. Gall. So nobly did he respond to it, that before his death the whole nation had embraced Christianity. An interesting token of his patient, loving industry still remains in the form of a glossary of German words, evidently intended as a handbook for daily use, while he was not yet fluent in this foreign tongue. It is probably the earliest attempt at expressing Christianity in a written German form; and though the original in his own handwriting is lost, the MS. now extant is scarcely less valuable, having been written by his monks within a century after his death.

It had long been his custom not to leave his abbey,

but in the end of September, about A.D. 645, he was with difficulty persuaded by his old friend, Willimar, to visit Arbon. All the neighborhood flocked to see and hear him, and for two days he labored to win souls for God. On the third day he wished to return to the abbey, but he was ill with fever, and could not travel. His illness increased for fourteen days, till on the 16th of October he expired in the ninety-fifth year of his age⁶.

After S. Gall's death his community shared the calamities which befell the province during the civil wars of the period. About A.D. 650, or a few years later', the abbey was burnt, the saint's body was left uncovered, and all the community, except Magnoald and Theodore, were dispersed. Again, A.D. 709, Pepin Heristal's army broke into the abbey, and carried off the fugitives who had sought safety in its sanctuary. But on each occasion, as soon as the ravagers departed the monks re-assembled round their master's tomb, and revived the observances that he had taught them. Thus amid great poverty and constant difficulties, S. Columban's rule was maintained for about a century.

S. Gall was not the only one of S. Columban's first companions, who made an independent religious foundation. Among the monks who had followed him from Ireland, and were expelled with him from Luxeuil, was a very old man, called Dichuill⁸, who is more generally

⁶ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 235.

⁷ Vit. S. Gall. Pertz, ii. p. 18, note 71.

⁸ Moran, Essays, p. 143.

known as Deicolus or Desle. He had not gone many miles on the road to Besançon, when his aged limbs totally failed him, and after a sorrowful parting from Columban, he was compelled to remain behind⁹.

Fearing to return to Luxeuil, he struck into the depths of the forest, seeking vainly for some vestige of human habitation, till at length, overcome with thirst and fatigue, he found himself quite alone on a dry and barren moor. Here raising his heart to God, he stuck his staff into the ground, and forthwith there gushed out a limpid stream which for centuries bore his name.

Thus revived, he wandered on through the solitude till he came unexpectedly upon a swineherd and a herd of swine. The swineherd, amazed at his great stature and his monk's habit, the like of which he had never seen, asked, "Who art thou? Whence comest thou, and what dost thou in this wilderness without guide or companion?" "Be not afraid, my brother," answered the old Irish monk, "I am a pilgrim; and I beg thee for charity's sake to show me a place where a man can live." The swineherd told him of a place which, though marshy, was habitable; but he refused to take him there, lest his swine should wander in his absence. Desle, however, answered boldly, "If thou dost me this little favor, I answer for it that thou shalt not lose the very least of thy herd. My staff shall replace thee, and be swineherd in thy stead." With these words he planted his staff in the ground,

⁹ Vit. S. Deicol. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 95.

and when the herdsman saw his swine collect round it and lie down, he ventured to leave them, and led the stranger to the spot of which he had spoken, and which has since received the name of Lure. Here Desle built himself a hut, and settled himself down to follow a hard and solitary life of prayer and penance.

Before long, however, his sanctity stirred up the jealousy of the priest of a small church in the neighborhood, who complained to Werfar, the lord of the place, of the intrusion of this foreign monk. Werfar, though a Christian, issued a brutal order that the stranger should be seized and cruelly mutilated; but before he could be obeyed, he was attacked by a horrible illness and died. Then his widow, in reparation for his intention, gave Desle all the land round his poor cell in the forest.

All alone as the old man was, he now began, single-handed, to clear away the trees and tangled brushwood, animated with the hope of building a house fit for God's service, and saying aloud, "This is my rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it¹." But when the people in the neighborhood saw the zeal of the feeble old man, they came forward generously to his aid; and with their help, before very long two beautiful chapels were built, one in honor of S. Peter, and the other of S. Paul. By the time they were finished disciples began to collect round S. Desle, and gradually a regular monastery was built.

Some time after Clotaire II. was hunting in the

¹ Psalm cxxxi. 14.

adjoining forest, when an enormous boar, pursued by the hunters, took refuge in the hermit's cell. Desle, laying his hand on the poor beast's head, said, "Since thou comest to ask charity, thy life shall be saved;" and the boar lay down at the foot of the altar, while the saint continued his devotions. Soon the nobles followed on the boar's track, and when they beheld the ferocious animal lying quietly beside the praying saint, they ran to tell the king, who came in haste to see the marvel with his own eyes. Then he began to question the old man as to how he and his companions subsisted in this wilderness; and Desle answered, "It is written that nothing shall be wanting to those who fear God. We lead a poor life, but with the fear of God it sufficeth us." When Clotaire discovered that Desle was the disciple of his old friend Columban, he gave him all the royal forests, pastures, and fisheries in the neighborhood of Lure, and these were so improved by the monks' laborious industry, that the Abbey of Lure became one of the most wealthy religious houses in Christendom. Clotaire gave the boar also to Desle, who let it loose, taking care that no one should molest it in its flight.

When the abbey was thus established and richly endowed, one thing still was wanting to secure its permanent prosperity. Reverting to the traditions of his native isle, and taught by S. Columban's experience, Desle resolved to place himself and his community under the Pope's protection. Notwithstanding his age and the difficulties of the long journey, he went for this purpose to Rome. Being admitted to an audience

of the holy Father, he said in answer to his inquiries, "I am an Irishman and a monk, and for Christ's sake a pilgrim. I live in the part of Burgundy called Lure, where, by God's help, I have built two oratories in honor of the Princes of the Apostles, to whom this city belongs. They are richly endowed by the surrounding princes with all that the brethren can need. But the people of that land are very fierce and rapacious; and therefore, Holy Father, I am come to commit myself and all these possessions to thy care; in token of which, I and my successors for ever, will give ten pieces of silver annually to this Apostolic See." A charter was accordingly drawn out and sealed with the Apostolic seal, conferring on the abbot whom the brethren should elect, full liberty to act in all religious matters according to his own judgment, and anathematizing all princes, nobles, and others, who should molest or interfere with him, save only the Roman Emperor and the legates of the Pope, under whose protection the abbey was placed. With this charter and many relics and ornaments for his churches, Desle returned to his abbey, where he died about A.D. 625. Thus was founded the great Abbey of Lure, round which was built the town of the same name, and the abbot of which, eleven centuries after, was one of the princes of the Holy Roman Empire².

Another of S. Columban's first companions, who was expelled with him from Luxueil but did not follow him into Italy, settled in the heart of the Jura on the

² Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

borders of Franche Comté and Switzerland, among the windings of the river Doubs³. His Irish name is lost, and he is known only as S. Ursicinus, or Ursanne, a name given him by some herdsmen, who having one day found him among almost inaccessible rocks covered with firs, published round the country that they had discovered on the mountain top, a man, wan and emaciated as S. John Baptist, who lived with the bears and was fed by them. As soon as the Irish hermit's retreat was known, disciples were attracted by the hardships of his life; and as their number increased, he was compelled to quit his barren mountain, and come down to the valley, where, in a peninsula formed by the river Doubs, he built a convent, round which the present town of Ursanne has risen. He also built an hospital, and kept mules to bring the sick poor to it over the steep mountain paths.

A few years after his death his monastery was occupied by a colony of monks from Luxeuil, at the head of which was S. Germanus, the son of a noble of Treves⁴. From his infancy Germanus was remarkable for piety, and when he was seventeen years of age, he was impelled by his ardent desire to fly from the world, to apply to Modoald, Bishop of Tours, to receive him as a cleric. But Modoald refused, for he feared to offend the king, to whose court Germanus was attached. Undaunted by this refusal, he distributed all his

³ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. note to p. 491. Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

⁴ Vit. S. German. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 489.

worldly possessions among the poor, and taking with him three boys, he made his way to S. Arnulph, Bishop of Metz, who was then living as a hermit in a wild place called Horenberg. Arnulph, touched by the youth's fervor, gladly gave him the tonsure, and after keeping him for some time, sent him to his friend Romaric's newly-founded monastery of Remiremont, whence he afterwards passed on to Luxeuil.

At this time Luxeuil was governed by Abbot Walbert, who had succeeded Eustasius about A.D. 625⁵. Such multitudes of young men were now flocking to Luxeuil that he knew not what to do with them, and he was looking out for some place to which he could transplant a colony. Gondoin, Duke of Alsace, hearing of his intention, made over to him a piece of land at no great distance from S. Ursicinus's monastery; and he accordingly sent thither a number of his monks with Germanus as their abbot. They found that their new possession was a fertile and beautiful valley, well watered by streams which abounded with fish, but so shut in by mountains, that it was almost inaccessible. The monks, however, set to work to cut a road through the solid rocks, Germanus taking his share of the labor; and when at last the task was accomplished, its completion was universally ascribed to supernatural aid in answer to his prayers. The valley was quickly brought under cultivation, and an abbey, since known as Moutier Grandval, was built; which, together with the abbeys

⁵ Various dates from A.D. 622 to A.D. 625 are given by different writers.

of Ursanne and Verdun, was governed by Germanus.

Meanwhile Duke Gondoin had died, and had been succeeded by Adalric⁶. He was no friend to the monks, and affecting to regard them as rebels, he sent a band of Allemanni to lay waste the neighborhood. Germanus, accompanied by his librarian, set out to remonstrate with Adalric, and when he saw the houses in flames and the poor people murdered, he exclaimed, "Enemy of God and of truth, is it thus that you treat a Christian country? Do you not fear to ruin this monastery which I have myself built?" The duke was touched, and promised to stop the ravages. But as Germanus was returning to the abbey, he met some soldiers committing acts of violence, and said to them, "Dear sons, do not commit so many crimes against the people of God." Whereupon, they rushed angrily on him, tore off his priestly vestments, and killed him and his companion, A.D. 670.

One of the noble families of Burgundy most closely connected with S. Columban, was that of the Dukes of Sequania, at the head of which were two brothers, Waldelin and Amalgar. Duke Waldelin being childless, went with his wife Flavia to Columban, and asked him to pray that God would give them a son to inherit their vast estates. "I will do it willingly," answered the saint; "and I will ask not only one but several, on condition that you give me the first-born, that I may baptize him with my own hand, and dedicate him to

⁶ Mabillon calls him Boniface or Cathicus.

the Lord." In course of time the long-wished-for son was born, and the parents, in simple faith that God would give them another heir, brought him to be baptized by Columban⁷, who called him Donatus and dedicated him to the religious life. After his baptism he was taken by his mother to be nursed, and at a fit age was brought back to Luxeuil, where he spent thirty years till A.D. 621, when he was made Bishop of Besançon. In this city he built a monastery dedicated to S. Paul, in which he established the rule of Luxeuil. He also built for his mother, Flavia, the convent of Jussamoutier at Besançon, and at her request he wrote for the nuns a very severe rule, based upon those of S. Cæsarius, S. Columban, and S. Benedict. His younger brother Ramelen, too, rebuilt the abbey of Romain Moutier in a pass of the Jura, and placed in it a colony from Luxeuil.

Nor was the love of monastic life confined to this branch of the family. Duke Amalgar also built and richly endowed in honor of God, S. Peter, and S. Paul, the abbey of Bèze, over which, A.D. 630, he placed his son Waldelin, whose miraculous conversion by S. Agilus has already been told⁸. He also built an abbey for his daughter Adalsind, at Bregille, near Besançon; but she could not long remain there, because of the annoyances which, in spite of her father's protection, she suffered from the wild tribes in the neighborhood. Many years later, A.D. 676, Abbot Waldelin's elder brother

⁷ Vit. S. Columban, c. 22. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 12.

⁸ Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5. Vit. S. Agil. c. 7. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 305.

being driven out of Austrasia by political troubles, the abbot united his property to that of the abbey, and thus the chief part of the lands of this noble family, passed into the hands of the Church.

The monastic spirit to which Columban had given so strong an impulse, spread like a contagion among the young nobles of the Merovingian court. Ermenfried and his brother⁹, young nobles of the Pagan tribe of the Varasques, were educated in the palace of Clotaire, and stood high in his favor. Ermenfried was obliged to go home to receive an inheritance, and as he wandered along a narrow valley where two little streams met, and his eyes rested on the ruined monastery of Cusance, an ardent desire seized him to rebuild the monastery and devote himself there to God's service. On his return to court he appeared before the king with his silk tunic falling over his feet. Then Clotaire said to him, "What is the matter, Ermenfried? What is this fashion of wearing thy tunic? Wouldest thou become a cleric?" Then the young noble falling on his knees, answered, "Yes, a cleric, and even a monk. I entreat you to grant me leave to become one." Clotaire consented; and both brothers quitted the court for the cloister, in spite of the remonstrances of their mother, who wished them to marry and perpetuate the family. Ermenfried went to Luxeuil, and became a priest and a monk; and then with thirty monks he rejoined his brother at Cusance. He loved work, and took to himself the humbler tasks, sifting the grain

⁹ Moines d'Occident, t. ii. l. ix. c. 5.

which the other monks threshed. So great was the honor in which he held hard labor, that when after Mass he distributed the blessed bread among the people, if he noticed that some of the outstretched hands were hard and rough from work, he would stoop down and kiss them with tender respect and love.

Among the nobles at the court of Theodebert were two young men, called Arnulph and Romaric. They were great friends: both were remarkable for the perfection with which they practised all the Christian virtues; and both became saints, though in very different ways. Arnulph¹ held high offices in Theodebert's court, and at the same time gave himself to prayer, fasting, and works of charity. He married and became the father of two sons, and eventually the progenitor of a long line of kings. For one of his sons married the daughter of Blessed Pepin de Landen², and from this marriage was born Pepin Heristal, the celebrated Mayor of the palace, who was the father of Charles Martel and grandfather of Pepin-le-Bref, first king of the Carlovingian dynasty. In the year 611, the Bishop of Metz dying, the people clamored to have Arnulph for their bishop; whereupon he, nothing loath, separated from his wife, who became a nun, while he received holy orders and was consecrated Bishop of Metz. Some years later Clotaire II. entrusted to him and Pepin de Landen the charge of his son Dagobert, to

¹ Vit. S. Arnulf. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 140.

² Rohrbacher, Histoire de l'Eglise, x. l. xlviii. p. 135. Vit. B. Pippin. Acta SS. Feb. 21.

whom he had given the kingdom of Austrasia; and in this position Arnulph initiated the Christian policy, which a century later was carried out more fully under S. Boniface's guidance, by his descendants, Carloman, Pepin-le-Bref, and Charlemagne. After a long life spent in God's service, Arnulph resigned his bishopric and retired to a forest solitude, where he passed his last years in prayer and penance, barefoot and clad in sackcloth, laboring in servile works, and living in a poor hut, amid wild beasts, and in the society of a few youths whom he trained to monastic life, and of crowds of poor whom his charity relieved.

Meanwhile, his friend Romaric³ filled his natural station as a young noble at the courts of Thierry and Clotaire II., where he was remarked for his valor and his Christian virtues. It happened that Amatus, a monk of Luxeuil, came to preach in Austrasia. This holy man had spent thirty years in a cell on the top of a high rock above the monastery of Agaune, clad in a sheep's skin, barefoot, and living on herbs, roots, and coarse bread made of barley, which was grown in a little field tilled by his own hands. S. Eustasius had persuaded him to join the community at Luxeuil, whence he now came to preach in Austrasia. One day he sat at Romaric's table, when the latter asked what he should do to be saved. Amatus answered, "Thou seest this silver dish. How many masters, or rather slaves, has it had, and how many more will it yet have? Thou art its slave, for thou possessest it only to preserve it. But an

³ Vit. S. Romaric. Acta SS. O. S. B., sæc. ii. p. 399.

account will be demanded thee of it. . . . I wonder that a man of birth, wealth, and intelligence like thee, should not remember our Lord's answer to him who asked Him how he should attain eternal life: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.'” Touched by these words, Romaric gave all his lands, except his castle of Habend, to the poor, set his serfs free, and went to Luxeuil to be a monk. Several of his serfs received the tonsure at the same time, and these he joyfully accepted as his superiors, seeking the lowest offices, and learning the Psalter by heart while he worked in the garden, in the cultivation of which he excelled.

After some years he and his friend Amatus went, with S. Eustasius's permission, to the estate which he had retained. Here on a steep hill, where the ruins of a Roman fortress, a temple, statues, and tombs, were still to be seen, in a forest inhabited by bears, a few leagues to the north of Luxeuil, they built a large church, seven smaller ones, and the celebrated double monastery of Remiremont for men and women⁴. The number of nuns increased so greatly, that the *Laus Perennis* was kept up by them in seven choirs in seven

⁴ The last bear at Remiremont was killed A.D. 1708. The Abbess of Remiremont at a later period ranked as a princess of the Holy Roman Empire. When pride of birth had corrupted many of the French convents, the relative rank of the nuns of three of them, was expressed by the common saying, “*Les dames de Remiremont, les femmes de chambres d'Epinal, et les blanchisseuses de Poussy*,” though even for a “*blanchisseuse de Poussy*” sixteen quarterings in her family arms were indispensable.—*Moines d'Occident*, ii. l. ix. c. 6.

separate churches. The great fervor of the community caused the abbey to be regarded as a model for nuns, as Luxeuil was for monks; and for many centuries it was known by the name of Le Saint Mont. Both monasteries were first governed by Amatus, and after his death, for thirty years by Romaric, who bequeathed the government to his granddaughter, from which time it was vested in the abbess. S. Arnulph, S. Romaric, and S. Amatus, were buried side by side in the Church of Remiremont.

S. Columban's influence was not confined to Burgundy and Austrasia. After his expulsion from Luxeuil, when he was travelling through Neustria, he happened to stop at the castle of a Frank noble on the banks of the Marne. The noble had three sons, whom he brought to receive the saint's blessing⁵. Some time after the youths were sent to be educated in the court of Clotaire II. and his son Dagobert; but the blessing of S. Columban clung to them. Before long Adon, the eldest, left the court and founded on a hill overlooking the Marne, the double monastery of Jouarre, in which he lived as a monk under the rule of S. Columban. Then Radon, the second brother, who had risen to be treasurer to Dagobert, retired from court and founded the Abbey of Reuil, also on the Marne. The third brother called Dadon, but since known as S. Ouen, was the favorite of Dagobert, who chose him for his confidant, and appointed him his referendary, or keeper of

⁵ Vit. S. Columban, c. 50. Acta SS. O. S. B. sec. ii. p. 22. Vit. S. Agil. c. 14. Ibid. p. 307. Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

his seal. But he, too, could not throw off the heavenly desires with which the saint's blessing had inspired him; and he devoted his wealth to building in the forests of La Brie a monastery called Rebais, from the torrent near which it stood, but to which he gave the name of Jerusalem. Here he wished to retire and end his days as a monk, but God had other work for him to do. The king and the nobles were so fond of him that they would not part with him; and he was obliged to remain at court till at last he was chosen to be Archbishop of Rouen.

In this very important position his zeal for God's service did not cool, nor did he forget his love for S. Columban. His first object was to find an abbot for his monastery at Rebais. Among the monks at Luxeuil the most beloved was Agilus, who has already been more than once mentioned. So great was the fame of his eloquence and miraculous gifts, that city after city asked to have him for their bishop; but the monks of Luxeuil would not part with him, for they hoped he might some day be their own abbot; and nothing less than a written command from the king, could induce them to let him go to the new Abbey of Rebais. Twelve monks from Luxeuil went with him, and he was joined by so many young nobles from the court and the neighborhood of the abbey, that the number of the community soon rose to eighty. Like all the monks of the time, they labored to bring back into cultivation lands, which the ravages of the barbarians had turned into uninhabited wilds. They also gave

unlimited alms to the poor and boundless hospitality to travellers, especially the Irish pilgrims who flocked to the abbey on their way to Rome, till often their resources would be almost exhausted.

One winter's night when the doors had been locked, Agilus made the round of the house to see that all was in order. As he entered the hospital he heard a feeble, plaintive voice outside, and looking through the wicket, he beheld on the ground a poor leper covered with sores, who begged for admission. Turning to the monk who was with him, he cried, "See how we have neglected our first duty for these other cares. Make haste and get something for him to eat." Then opening the postern, he said to the poor man, "Come, my brother, we will do for thee all that thou needest." And taking the leper on his shoulders, and carrying him in, he placed him in a seat by the fire, after which he went in haste to fetch water and linen to wash him. But when he returned, lo! the poor leper had vanished, and only a sweet odor that filled the house, remained to tell of his presence. Thus did S. Agilus receive unawares an angel, or rather the Lord of angels, who deigns to identify Himself with His poor and sick members, according to His promises in the Gospel.

Among S. Agilus's disciples was Philibert⁶, a young noble educated at Dagobert's court, and warmly attached to S. Ouen. At the age of twenty he became a monk at the Abbey of Rebais, and, after rising to the dignity of abbot, he spent some time at Luxeuil,

⁶ Vit. S. Filibert. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 784.

Bobbio, and other houses under S. Columban's rule; and finally founded the Abbey of Jumièges, on the Seine, in the diocese of his friend S. Ouen. Besides the ordinary monastic labors of bringing waste ground into cultivation, he took advantage of the position of his abbey to carry on a trade with British and Irish sailors, taking care, however, to observe the invariable monastic rule of allowing his customers more favorable terms than were usually given by lay traders. His monks, also, made oil from the porpoises, which then came up the Seine; and they fitted out ships, in which they sailed to distant parts to spend the tithe of their wealth in the redemption of poor captives. Probably many of these attached themselves to the abbey, which in course of time contained nine hundred monks, besides fifteen hundred servants who filled lay offices.

S. Philibert also founded the Abbey of Noirmoutier, on the coast of Poitou, and that of Montivillers for women in the Pays de Caux⁷.

Another friend of S. Ouen's was S. Vandregisil, or Vaudrille, grandson of S. Arnulph⁸. He was educated at Dagobert's court⁹, and rising to be Count of the palace, wealth and dignities were within his reach, when he was seized by the prevalent monastic contagion. Forced by his parents to marry, he induced his wife to become a nun, while he fled to the cell of a hermit on the banks of the Meuse. As the military services

⁷ Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

⁸ Michelet, Histoire de France, l. ii. c. 2.

⁹ Vit. S. Wandregisil. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 503.

of these high-spirited youths were of great value, they were forbidden to become monks or clerics without the king's leave; and Dagobert, therefore, was very angry that one so immediately attached to his own person, should have thus fled from his duty, and he commanded him to return. When the unhappy Vandregisil arrived at the court, not knowing what punishment awaited him, he beheld before the palace gates a poor man, whose cart had upset, lying in the mud. None heeded his distress, and some even trod upon him; but no sooner did the young Count of the palace cast his eyes on him, than he got off his horse, lifted the poor man, and helped him to set up his cart. Then, covered with mud, and heeding not the jeers of the courtiers, he hurried to the royal presence. But Dagobert, beholding in his soiled garments only the effulgence of humility and charity, was at once pacified, and bade him follow his supernatural vocation.

Having thus gained his freedom, Vandregisil went to S. Ursanne, and thence to Bobbio; and so great was his ardor in the practice of mortification, that he proposed even going to Ireland to drink in its spirit at the fountain head. But it was in France that God had assigned him his task. Accordingly, after spending ten years at Romain Moutier, he went to visit his friend S. Ouen at Rouen. S. Ouen would not part with him, and persuaded him, A.D. 648, to found, not far from Jumièges, the Abbey of Fontenelle, afterwards called S. Vandrille, which was so famous in Norman history; and such a multitude of monks flocked to it, that Van-

dregisil had to build four churches for their use. His monks planted on a slope the first vineyard that existed in Normandy.

S. Columban's influence extended also to a poor shepherd boy of Auvergne, Walaric or Valery¹, whose name has come down to posterity with as much honor as those of the above noble founders. Happening to see some noble children going to a neighboring convent school, the love of learning awoke within him, and he asked a monk to write out an alphabet for him, with the help of which he managed, while keeping his father's sheep, to read and learn by heart the whole of the Psalter. Soon he took to monastic life, and after being in two monasteries, found his way to S. Columban at Luxeuil. Here he had charge of the novices' garden, and it flourished so wonderfully under his care, and so sweet a perfume always hung around him, that he was considered to be specially favored by God. Even S. Columban, charmed with the lad's purity and virtue, would exclaim with saintly humility, "It is thou, my well-beloved, who art the true abbot and lord of this monastery." After S. Columban's death the missionary spirit took possession of him, and with S. Eustasius's permission he set out for Neustria. He wandered about for a time, and at last settled at Leuconäus, at the mouth of the Somme, on a piece of land given him by Clotaire II., whose generosity enabled him to build an abbey. Hence he made excursions, mounted on an ass,

¹ Vit. S. Walaric. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 71.

preaching, felling sacred oaks, and also a tall wooden pillar carved with images of the gods, which stood on the banks of the Somme near Eu. Though he fearlessly braved violence, and even death, often arresting the outrages of the Pagans by his calm intrepidity, yet his gentleness was so great, that flocks of birds would sport familiarly round him and eat out of his hand.

After his death his converts erected a chapel to his memory on the spot, where had stood an oak which he cut down at the risk of his life. One day some women were passing it, when one of them went in to pray, and exhorted her companions to do the same. But spurning the suggestion, a Pagan girl said scornfully to her mother, "Dear mother, would these people have us venerate the man, whom we used to see going about the country mounted on an ass and miserably clad?" "Yes," answered the mother, "it is as you say; these peasants erect a temple in honor of him, who did among us only vile and contemptible things." As they spoke thus, a violent spasm seized the girl, and being in excruciating agony, she bethought her of the saint, and going to his shrine, humbly begged his pardon and intercession, and was instantly cured. Round the Abbey of Leuconäus grew the town of S. Valery sur Somme; and the Abbey and town of S. Valery en Caux arose after the translation thither of his relics, A.D. 1197, by Richard Cœur de Lion².

Another abbey in Ponthieu, not far from S. Valery

² Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

sur Somme, owed its origin indirectly to S. Columban. When he first landed from Ireland he sent two of his monks to preach in that neighborhood³. The Pagans attacked them and were about to ill-treat them, when a noble called Riquier, received them into his house. They repaid him by inspiring him with a great love for monastic life. He became a priest and a monk, and went about preaching with great success to both rich and poor, and even boldly reproving King Dagobert, at whose table he always was an honored guest. He extended his missions to Britain; and on his return to France he built on his estate at Centule, north of the Somme, an abbey which afterwards took his name, and was one of the principal monasteries of France.

Not far from these monastic settlements there was another colony from Luxeuil. About the time that S. Columban was at Bregenz, there arrived at Luxeuil⁴, probably through his influence, a German noble from the neighborhood of Constance, with his son, Audomar or Omer, and several of his friends, all of whom became monks. The father died at Luxeuil, and Omer remained there till, about twenty years later, he was made Bishop of Terouanne. This town was the capital of a Gallic tribe, called Morini. Many martyrs had shed their blood here in earlier times, but notwithstanding, the people had either totally relapsed into idolatry, or mixed up the Christian faith with the grossest Pagan superstitions. S. Omer sent

³ Vit. S. Richarii, by Alcuin. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 179.

⁴ Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 5.

to Luxeuil for three monks of his own nation, the youngest of whom, Bertin, was a relative of his own. He established them in a marshy island in the middle of an almost impassable morass, the soil of which they raised by excessive labor, and on it they built an abbey, afterwards known by S. Bertin's name. The community soon increased to two hundred; the rule of S. Columban was strictly observed; within fifty years the morass was converted into a fertile plain; and so high was the general tone of sanctity, that no less than twenty-two of the monks have been solemnly canonized.

After thirty years of Apostolic labor, S. Omer was buried in a church which he had built on a neighboring hill, and which has become the cathedral of the town bearing his name, which was built round it. As for S. Bertin, after ruling the abbey for fifty years and exercising an extraordinary influence on the neighboring population, he resigned the dignity of abbot and retired to a hermitage in an island to prepare for death.

All these places have a peculiar interest for English Catholics. It was in the Abbey and hermitage of S. Bertin that S. Thomas of Canterbury took refuge in his flight from the oppression of Henry Plantagenet. It was in the city of S. Omer that, during the bloody times of the Tudors and Stuarts, fugitive priests found a kindly welcome; and in the seminary of S. Omer were trained those heroic youths, who went forth to keep alive the faith of the persecuted English Catholics, and to water the soil of England with their blood.

Such are a few of the great monasteries, which sprung up at this time among the Franks and Burgundians. To mention them all would be impossible. For such numbers of men of all ranks flocked to Luxeuil, that Abbot Walbert knew not how to dispose of them; and also "throughout all the provinces of Gaul, colonies of monks and nuns were to be seen, swarming forth like bees, into the plains and villas, the towns and castles, and even into untrodden wilds, to make themselves homes, in which they could live under the rule of S. Benedict and S. Columban⁶."

Each of these innumerable monasteries was a centre of religion, learning, charity, and civilization. Within each the voice of prayer and praise rose day and night to heaven; the education of old and young, rich and poor, was constantly carried on; the traveller, the sick, the needy and the oppressed, found a refuge in which every want was supplied and every sorrow was soothed. And while thus on the one hand, the monks were infusing the leaven of religion, purity, and cultivated thought into the mass of barbarism and vice, and impressing on the nation its indelible Catholic character, on the other hand, by their wonderful industry in clearing forests, reclaiming wilds, draining marshes, and making roads and bridges, they won for the land its distinctive name of "la belle France."

But while S. Columban's name and influence were thus penetrating France, his rule was being superseded by that of S. Benedict. Even under his two first successors,

⁶ Vit. S. Salaberga, c. 7. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 407.

S. Eustasius and S. Walbert, the Benedictine rule alone, or the two rules conjointly, were established in foundations which issued from Luxeuil, and were made in S. Columban's name and honor. So often were the two names united, the monks being ordered to follow the rule of S. Benedict "in the way of Luxeuil" (ad modum Luxoviensem), that some have supposed, though erroneously, that the rules were identical, and that S. Columban introduced the Benedictine rule into Luxeuil⁶.

At length, about A.D. 674⁷, at the Council of Autun, at which S. Leger, formerly a monk of Luxeuil, presided, fifty-four bishops formally imposed the Benedictine rule on all the religious houses of France. Seventy years later, at the Council of Leptines, held by S. Boniface, A.D. 742, its observance by all the monasteries of Gaul and Germany, was commanded⁸. And, finally, when, A.D. 817, S. Benedict of Anagni was appointed by Louis le Debonnaire to visit all the convents of France, it was said, that "as one rule was professed by all, all should have the same customs⁹." Thus ended the mission of S. Columban, who, like a blazing comet, swept across the vault of heaven, leaving behind him a resplendent stream of light, which was gradually absorbed by the steady glow of the rising sun.

⁶ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. Preface, c. 14.

⁷ Different dates, from A.D. 665 to A.D. 674, are assigned to this council. Moines d'Occident, ii. l. ix. c. 7.

⁸ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. Preface, c. 48.

⁹ Concil. Aix. A.D. 817. Vit. S. Benedict Anian. by his disciple S. Ardo, n. 36. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. Preface, c. 18.

The short duration of S. Columban's rule has been ascribed to his peculiar Irish customs, his want of union with the Roman See, and his strong nationalism. The two first causes have been much exaggerated, though doubtless the want of the Pope's support, was a great loss to him in his contest with the French bishops. But his strong Celtic spirit alone sufficed to account for his limited influence.

S. Columban and his rule were like his nation, pure, impetuous, and heroic, but narrow, unbending, and incapable of organization. His sole idea of the spiritual life was what he had learnt at Bangor, and his great object, to transplant to Gaul what he had witnessed there. His yoke and his rod were of iron; but they were not too heavy nor too strong for the fierce, passionate men with whom he had to deal, and who were attracted, rather than terrified, by the heroic self-sacrifices that he demanded of them. His influence with the Franks was accidentally strengthened by his being a barbarian like themselves, free from all taint of Roman civilization, while to the Gallo-Romans he inspired admiration, as being their superior on their own vantage-ground of learning and Christian virtue. But when S. Columban had roused the barbarian spirit, and given it the first impulse to monastic life, it was universally felt, that more practical and pliable guidance than his was needed by both abbots and monks, in order to meet the varying circumstances that were constantly arising. All that was wanted, was supplied by the rule of S. Benedict. It, too, partook of the national

spirit of its founder; but it was the strong, pliable, organized, and Catholic spirit of Rome that it breathed.

It has been remarked¹, that the Irish monks succeeded only in those countries in which they found Celtic populations; and that where they came in contact with purely German races, they were able only to sow in their own blood the seed, which missionaries of a different nationality would soon come to water and to reap.

By the end of the seventh century many bishoprics had been founded on German soil—Augsburg, Constance, and Strasburg in Allemania; and Mayence, Spire, Worms, Treves, Metz, Toul, Verdun, Cologne, Maestricht, and Cambrai in Austrasia; all of which were within the old Roman Empire. Thus, the Church had hitherto been only recovering lost ground, without adding to her territory. The time, however, was now close at hand when her frontier was to be extended; but the honor of this victory was reserved, neither for Ireland nor Gaul, but for a nation of the Teutonic race, fresh from the baptismal font, and still breathing the purity and heroic fervor of its first Christian love.

¹ Ozanam, *Civilisation Chrétienne*, c. iv. p. 140.

PART III.

CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH.

CHAPTER I.

CONVERSION OF KENT.

ONE morning, about the year 576, a monk, thirty-six years of age, above the average stature, with a high, broad forehead, and a noble and gentle expression of countenance, was seen to enter the slave-market of Rome¹. Though he wore only the coarse black habit of a Benedictine monk, all saluted him with respect as he passed along, and many a word of love and blessing hung upon his footsteps. For this was Gregory, a member of a noble and saintly family, and the largest landed proprietor of Italy. He had formerly filled the high office of prætor of Rome, and had won the love of the Romans by his justice and magnificence. He had also built and endowed six monasteries in Sicily, where he had large estates; and not satisfied with these princely donations to the Church, he had only the year before turned his own palace on the Cælian

¹ This date and the fact of S. Gregory's being a Benedictine monk are given on the authority of Mabillon. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i.* Preface, cc. lxxvii.—lxxxii.; and Rohrbacher, ix. l. xlvi. p. 263. S. Gregory's personal appearance is taken from a picture in the monastery of S. Andrew at Rome. Rohrbacher, ix. l. xlvii. p. 517.

hill into a monastery dedicated to S. Andrew; and after distributing all his goods among the poor, he had himself become a monk.

As Gregory looked wistfully on the unhappy barbarian captives exposed for sale, his attention was attracted by a group of three beautiful boys with fair complexion, rosy cheeks, and golden locks. Asking whether they were Christians and being told that they were Pagans, he exclaimed with a deep sigh, "Alas! that the Prince of darkness should possess such beautiful faces; and that with such fair countenances, their minds should be devoid of the grace of God." Then asking what was their nation, and hearing that they were Angles, he said, "Rightly are they called Angles or Angels; for they have angelic faces, and it is meet that such should be companions of the angels in heaven." Hearing that they came from a province called Deira, he replied, "Truly are they *De irâ*, being withdrawn from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ." And being told that their king was *Ælla*, he added, "It is well that the king should be *Ælla*, for *Alleluia* to the praise of the Creator must be sung in that land."

Going quickly to the Pope, Benedict I., he urged him to send missionaries to Britain; and when no one could be found to undertake the arduous task, he offered himself for the work. Greatly were the Roman clergy opposed to Gregory's departure; but so earnestly did he press his request, that Benedict at last consented, and giving him the Apostolic blessing, sent him forth to convert the Angles.

No sooner, however, did Gregory's departure become known in Rome, than the people beset the Pope on his way to S. Peter's, crying out, "You have offended S. Peter, you have destroyed Rome, because you have sent Gregory away." Nor could they be appeased till Benedict, overcome by their clamors, sent messengers to bring Gregory back².

They found him on the great northern road, three days' journey from the Flaminian Gate, resting in a meadow at noon. He was reading, while his companions lay around on the ground. A locust rested on his book, whereupon he said, "Rightly is it called *Locus-ta*, for it seems to say *loco sta* (stay in your place). I see that we shall not be able to finish our journey. But rise, load the mules, and let us go as far as we can." As he was still speaking, the Pope's messengers galloped up in hot haste, and forced him to return to Rome.

But though Gregory was thus stopped in his work, the thought of those angel faces never died out of his memory³. Many years passed on, and he became Pope A.D. 590. Five years after, having occasion to send a legate, Candidus, to collect some money in Gaul, he bade him lay out what he received in the purchase of Angle slaves of seventeen or eighteen years of age, whom he would train in his monastery for the service

² Vit. S. Gregor. Magn. a Joanne Diacono, c. 21—24. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. p. 397.

³ Ep. S. Greg. l. ix. 108. In writing to Syagrius, Bishop of Autun, he said that the mission to Britain had been in his thoughts long before it was accomplished. Lives of the English Saints (ed. Toovey), S. Augustine, c. ix. p. 76.

of God ; adding with paternal thoughtfulness, " But as they will yet be Pagans, they must be accompanied by a priest, who may baptize them if they fall ill by the way⁴."

About this time he heard, probably from Bertha, the Christian queen of Ethelbert, king of Kent, that the English were " earnestly longing for the grace of life⁵." He therefore resolved to send Augustine, the Prior of his own monastery, with forty monks to preach to them.

The nation to whom Christianity was now about to be offered, was composed of Jutes, Saxons, and Angles, the three most powerful Low German tribes, who dwelt between the mouths of the Elbe and the Rhine, and at the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, or Holstein, where there still is a district called Anglen⁶. They were closely allied to each other by blood and marriage ; they all spoke the same language, and were governed by chiefs, who claimed descent from one or other of the sons of Woden. They had invaded Britain in the middle of the fifth century ; when the Jutes settled in Kent, the Isle of Wight, and the opposite coast of Hampshire, the Saxons, in Essex, Sussex, and Wessex, and the Angles, in East Anglia, Middle Anglia or Mercia, and the two Northumbrian kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira⁷.

The most powerful of these tribes were the Angles⁸,

⁴ Ep. S. Gregory, l. vi. 7. Ap. Rohrbacher, ix. l. xlvii. p. 482.

⁵ Ep. S. Greg. l. vi. 58, to Thierry and Theodebert. English Saints, S. Augustine, c. ix. p. 84.

⁶ Palgrave, Hist. England. Anglo-Saxon Period, c. ii. p. 27.

⁷ Bede, Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. xv. p. 24, ed. Giles.

⁸ From them the whole nation came to be known on the Continent as

who came over in such numbers that their old home in Germany was quite deserted. By their family alliances and the wealth which they had collected in their piratical and trading voyages, they had attained to pre-eminence among their neighbors. They were distinguished, not only by the general noble characteristics of the Teutonic race, but by their fine intellectual powers, uniting quick perceptions and deep thoughtfulness with a rich flow of ideas and tender sensitiveness⁹, while they were happily free from all taint of that Roman corruption which proved so fatal to the Goths and Franks. But they were no less remarkable for their ferocity and rapacity. They pursued with passionate eagerness the traffic in human beings, and sold not only captives fairly taken in war, but others whom they carried off in their freebooting excursions, and also their own countrymen, even those of tender years; so that at the time when no foreign invader had access to England, English youths were constantly to be found in the slave-markets of both Rome and Gaul. Thus, even by other barbarians, they were regarded with peculiar horror and dread.

Notwithstanding their prowess, and the enfeebled

Angli, and later as English; while the country was called Angleland, or Engleland. The name Anglo-Saxon was used by Edward the Elder, who after uniting Northumbria to his own Saxon kingdom of Wessex, sometimes styled himself *Rex Anglo-Saxonum*, and at other times *Rex Anglorum*. Freeman, *Old English History*, c. iv. p. 31; and c. viii. p. 138. Thus Anglo-Saxons does not mean the Saxons in England, but the nation composed of Angles and Saxons. We have used in preference throughout the name English for the whole nation.

⁹ Freytag, *Bilder*, c. ii. p. 134.

state to which the Britons had been reduced under Roman rule, the latter made so desperate a stand in defence of their homes, that at the end of the sixth century, after the struggle had continued for a hundred and fifty years, they still possessed considerably more than half of their native land. At that time they still retained all the territory west of the Severn and south of the Axe, including Wales, Cornwall, Devonshire, and great part of Somersetshire; also Strath Clyde, from the Clyde southwards, taking in Ayrshire, Galloway, Cumberland, Westmoreland, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and a broad tract of land between Chester and Lincolnshire, which jutted like a peninsula into the territory of the Middle Angles and West Saxons, as far as Warwick and Bedford¹.

But what was wanting to the conquest in its extent, was made up for by its ruthless cruelty. All the public and private buildings were destroyed; the whole country was plundered and burnt; the bishops and priests were killed at their altars; the people were butchered without mercy, and left in heaps unburied; while of the survivors, some fled abroad, others lived miserably in the woods and mountains, and others again, exhausted by their privations, gave themselves up to endure a cruel servitude. So complete was the ruin of the vanquished race, that no Christians were to be found within the conquered territory when Augustine arrived².

¹ Freeman, *Old English History*, Map to c. v. p. 39.

² *Historia Gildæ*, cc. xxiv—xxvi. Gale, *Historiæ Briton. Saxon. et Anglo-Dan. Script.* p. 15.

Such were the people to whom Augustine and his companions were sent. No wonder, then, that by the time they reached Provence, they were so terrified at the accounts of the ferocity of the English which they heard on all sides, that they sent Augustine back to Rome to entreat the Pope not to compel them to undertake so dangerous, uncertain, and difficult a work among fierce, unbelieving barbarians, of whose language even they were ignorant. But Gregory wrote back to remind them, that it had been better not to begin a good work, than to think of desisting from that which they had begun. He therefore exhorted them not to let the toil of the journey or the tongues of evil-speaking men, deter them; but to persevere with all possible zeal and earnestness, being assured that much labor is followed by an eternal reward in the heavenly country, in which he hoped to see the fruits of their toil and to partake of their joy, since he was willing, though unable, to labor with them. He also gave Augustine commendatory letters to Brunehaut and her sons, soliciting their protection, and to Ætherius, Archbishop of Lyons, and the bishops of Gaul, authorizing them to consecrate Augustine Archbishop of the English, if they should prove willing to receive him³.

³ Gotcelin, Vit. S. Augustin. 6. 24. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i, pp. 493. 501. S. Gregory in his letter to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria after mentioning S. Augustine's great success in England, says, "Data a se licentiâ a Germanorum Episcopis Episcopum factum." Ang. Sacra, i. p. 89. Some have asserted that S. Augustine was consecrated by S. Gregory before he left Rome; but this is contradicted by the above, and also by Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. i. c. xxvii.

Thus encouraged Augustine rejoined his companions, to whom he communicated the Apostolic fervor and courage, with which S. Gregory had inspired him. They passed safely through Burgundy; but on crossing the Loire into Neustria, they had a foretaste of what they might expect in Britain. One evening, arriving hungry and toil-worn at the town of Sai or Cé in Anjou, they were about to enter it, when they were rudely driven away by a crowd of women, who attacked them with sticks and stones as if they were wild beasts, pursuing them with shouts of derision at their poor appearance and strange garb. The monks escaped with difficulty from their pursuers, and retiring to a large elm at some distance, spent the night under its shade, singing the praises of God. But, lo! as the day closed a wondrous light appeared over the elm, and all through the darkness its celestial splendour illumined the spot, where God's saints reposed. When the inhabitants of the town beheld this light, they were filled with awe and contrition, and striking their breasts, exclaimed with sighs and groans, "Woe to us! Woe! We drove these angels from our gates, and we have lost their blessing!" At the first break of dawn the whole population sallied forth, and besought the holy men to enter their city and accept the best gifts they could offer. Gladly did the weary pilgrims receive this unexpected hospitality; in return for which they preached the gospel of peace to these Pagan barbarians. Upon the spot where they passed the night a church was built, which, as late as the last

century, was used as a parish church. It was dedicated to S. Augustine, or S. Autun, and within its walls was a spring, celebrated for its healing virtues, which was said to have gushed forth miraculously for his use⁴.

Augustine and his companions continued their journey to the coast. Then crossing the Channel, and passing the fine ports of Sandwich and Richborough in Kent, they entered the Stour, at that time a broad river, and landed at the promontory of Ebb's Fleet on the Isle of Thanet, now lying within Pegwell Bay⁵.

The Kingdom of Kent, to which the Isle of Thanet belonged, was then governed by Ethelbert, the great-great-grandson of Hengist. He had come to the throne, A.D. 560, and, proud of his descent, had aspired to dominion over the other English kings by being elected Bretwalda. But he was constantly unsuccessful, and at last, A.D. 568⁶, he suffered a crushing defeat at Wimbledon from Ceaulin, King of the West Saxons, who was chosen Bretwalda in his stead. In the year 570 he married Bertha, daughter of Charibert, King of Paris, and from this time his fortune changed; so that on the death of Ceaulin, A.D. 593⁷, he at length became

⁴ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. p. 495, note. . .

⁵ There still exists a farm-house called Ebb's Fleet. But the sea having receded, it stands no longer on a promontory, but on a high ridge, which runs inland from Pegwell Bay. Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, i. p. 12.

⁶ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an. 568. Ed. Giles.

⁷ Ibid. an. 593.

Bretwalda. Bertha was a Christian, and Ethelbert had obtained her hand only on the condition that she should be allowed the free exercise of her religion. She had, therefore, been accompanied to Britain by S. Liudhard, Bishop of Senlis, but he was now dead⁸, and she was thus left alone among Pagans.

As soon as Augustine and his monks landed at Ebb's Fleet, they sent some Franks, whom they had brought with them as interpreters, to Ethelbert, to tell him that they were come from Rome with a joyful message, which most undoubtedly assured to all who took advantage of it, everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that would never end, with the living and true God. Ethelbert, who had already heard of this kingdom from Bertha, gave them a courteous reception, but ordered them to remain in the Isle of Thanet, where they should be provided with all they needed, while he considered what he should do.

Before many days Ethelbert went to the Isle of Thanet to give audience to the strangers; but he would meet them only in the open air, for he feared their practising magical arts, which, he fancied, would have effect only in a house. Augustine and his companions went out in solemn procession to meet the king, bearing, as their banner, a silver cross and a picture of our Lord, and singing litanies for their own salvation and that of the people to whom they were sent. Ethelbert bade them sit down; and when they

⁸ Gallia Christiana, x. p. 1382. He is said to have died A.D. 596. English Saints, S. Augustine, c. x. p. 92.

were seated, Augustine announced the Gospel to all who were present. When he had finished his discourse Ethelbert answered, "Your words and promises are very fair; but as they are new to us and of uncertain import, I cannot approve them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart those things which you believe to be true and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but will give you favorable entertainment, and take care to supply you with your necessary sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach, and to gain as many as you can to your religion⁹."

Having obtained leave to go to Canterbury, then the capital of Kent, they entered the city in solemn procession as before, carrying the silver cross and the picture of our Lord, and singing in unison, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy infinite mercy, to turn away Thy anger from this city, and from Thy holy house, because we have sinned. Hallelujah."

They first took up their abode at the Stable-gate, a stone's throw from the king's palace, and near the present church of S. Alfege, where there was a heathen temple, at which the king's servants used to worship¹. In the church of S. Martin on the east side of the city, where Queen Bertha had been in the habit of praying, they assembled to carry on the devo-

⁹ Bede, l. i. c. xxv. p. 37.

¹ Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, c. i. p. 18.

tions and mode of life to which they were accustomed in their monastery at Rome; and at the same time they preached the faith to all who would listen. Their lowly and simple demeanor, the beauty of their doctrine, and the miraculous gifts which proved the truth of their words, soon drew many converts to them; and at length Ethelbert himself received the faith, and was baptized on Whit-Sunday, June 2nd, A.D. 597. He now gave Augustine leave to repair the British churches, and he bestowed on him settled possessions for the maintenance of himself and his monks.

Augustine having thus got a firm footing in England, went over to France to receive Episcopal consecration, as Pope Gregory had ordered. On the 16th of November, A.D. 597², Ætherius, Archbishop of Lyons³, consecrated him Archbishop of the English, thus leaving him at liberty to fix his chair where he should hereafter deem expedient.

On Augustine's return to England, increasing crowds flocked to hear the word of God; and so rapidly did

² English Saints, S. Augustine, c. xi. p. 110.

³ Bede calls Ætherius Archbishop of Arles, and John the Deacon in his Life of S. Gregory, and Gotcelin, in his Life of S. Augustine, follow him. But Mabillon shows (*Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i. notes* to pp. 412 and 493) from the rolls of the bishoprics, that Ætherius was Archbishop of Lyons, and Virgilius of Arles. Hence Giles and other modern writers say that S. Augustine was consecrated by Virgilius. But Henschenius and John Stilling are of opinion (*Acta SS. Aug. 27. S. Ætherius. Syllog. Historic. 8, 9*) that Ætherius was the consecrator, since Bede would more readily fall into an error as to the name of a place than of a person, more especially since S. Gregory, in many of his letters, and probably in the original of this one, mentions only the name of the bishop to whom he writes.

the faith spread, that on Christmas Day, A.D. 597, ten thousand converts were baptized. Ethelbert naturally showed more favor to those who were his fellow-citizens in the kingdom of heaven; but he would not compel any to be baptized; for Augustine had taught him that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, and not compulsory.

Augustine now sent two of his monks, Laurentius and Peter, to carry the good news of his success to S. Gregory. The exultation with which it was received, appears in the letters of the saintly Pope, announcing the great victory to his correspondents, and thanking God that the swelling waves of the ocean had become a pathway to the feet of His Saints, and loud Alleluias were sung to his praise by barbarous tongues⁴. Augustine had also written to S. Gregory, asking for instructions on various points connected with the discipline of the Church that he was about to found. In answer, S. Gregory gave him minute directions on each head; and this letter, with others which followed it, became the rule, not only of the English Church, but also of that founded in the next century in Germany by S. Boniface. S. Gregory also sent chalices and patens, vestments, ornaments for the altars, relics of the Apostles and martyrs, books, and all that was required for the proper celebration of Mass, as well as singers skilled in antiphonal chanting. For the noisy, harsh singing of the German barbarians, whether at feasts or in church, being very offensive to refined

⁴ Vit. S. Augustin. c. xxvi.

Roman ears, S. Gregory had composed the Gregorian tones, as being suited alike to the lowest capacity and the most cultivated taste; and he was anxious that his infant Church should be trained from the first in the best style of chant⁵.

But though S. Gregory was at such pains to have the worship of God performed with due reverence, he took so wide a view of the subject, that he wrote to Augustine, "You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman Church, in which you were bred up. But it pleases me, that if you have found any thing, either in the Roman or the Gallic, or any other Church which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the Church of the English, which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several Churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of the places, but places for the sake of good things. Choose, therefore, from any Church, those things that are pious, religious, and upright, and when you have, as it were, made them up into one body, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto⁶. Further he sent back with Laurentius and Peter, on their return to England, several priests and monks, the principal of whom were Paulinus, Mellitus, Justus, and Rufinianus, all of whom afterwards held high offices in the English Church. He also sent a pall to Augustine, as Bishop of London, for he concluded that he would choose that city, as the British bishops had formerly done, for his

⁵ Vit. S. Gregor. l. ii. cc. vi—viii.

⁶ Bede, l. i. c. xxvii. p. 41.

metropolitan see; and he bade him ordain twelve bishops as his suffragans, and also a Bishop of York, to whom he would send a pall, and who also was to ordain twelve suffragans. He further made Augustine primate, not only over the newly-founded Church, but over "all the priests of Britain; to the end, that from his mouth and life, they might have the rule of believing rightly, living well, and fulfilling their offices in faith and good manners⁷." At this time neither London nor York was open to Augustine, and he therefore chose Canterbury for his metropolis, and Gregory's successors, Popes Boniface and Honorius, confirmed his choice. Thirty years elapsed before a bishop made his way to York; and the twelve northern suffragan bishoprics which Gregory planned, have not yet been erected; though after the lapse of twelve centuries and a half his appointment of London as the primatial see, has been carried out.

Ethelbert's magnificent generosity rendered Canterbury at that time the most suitable place for the metropolitan see. Not content with his former donation of S. Martin's Church, he gave up his own palace in Canterbury and his royal city to Augustine, and retired to Reculver. Within the precincts of the palace, Augustine found a church, which, he was told, had been built and used by the Roman Christians. This he repaired and consecrated afresh as his own cathedral, by the name of Christ Church; and adjoining it he fitted up a monastery for himself and his monks.

⁷ Bede, l. i. c. xxix. p. 54.

Thus it came to pass that from that time till the sixteenth century, the Archbishop of Canterbury always was Abbot of the monastery of Christ Church.

There was also at some little distance from the city, a small Roman church, where Ethelbert had formerly worshipped his Pagan gods. He now gave it also to Augustine, who reconsecrated it and dedicated it to S. Pancras^s, the Roman boy of fourteen, who had been martyred in the Diocletian persecution, and on whose family property stood the monastery of S. Andrew at Rome. On an adjoining plot of land he built a monastery, which he dedicated to S. Peter and S. Paul, but which was afterwards known as the Abbey of S. Augustine. He intended it to be a school of learning, and he placed in it the books that S. Gregory had sent him. These were a Bible in two volumes, a Psalter, a Book of the Gospels, Lives of the Apostles, and Expositions of certain Gospels and Epistles. And in the Canterbury Book, now at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, it was written, "These are the foundations, or beginning of the library of the whole English Church⁹." Peter, who carried the news of Augustine's success to Rome, was the first abbot of this monastery, and Rufinianus, one of those who accompanied him back from Rome, was the third.

These foundations and the establishment of Christian worship and discipline in the infant Church, fully occupied Augustine for some time. He received

^s English Saints, S. Augustine, c. x. p. 93.

⁹ Bede, l. i. c. xxv. p. 38, note.

further directions from S. Gregory in a letter addressed to Mellitus, but he was left at liberty, "as being on the spot, to consider how he was to order all things." In this letter¹ S. Gregory bids him not "destroy the temples, but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed. For if the temples be well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account; as for instance, that on the day of the dedication, or nativities of the holy martyrs whose relics are there deposited, they may build themselves huts of the boughs of trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer beasts to the devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the Giver of all things. . . that whilst they offer the same beasts they were wont to offer, they offer them to God and not to idols, and thus they would no longer be the same sacrifices. . . To the end that while some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God. For there is no doubt

¹ Bede, l. i. c. xxx. p. 55.

that it is impossible to efface every thing at once from their obdurate minds ; because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest places, rises by degrees, or steps, and not by leaps."

When the Church in Kent had been placed on a good and solid footing, Augustine turned his thoughts to the other parts of the island, and especially to the British Christians, over whom the Pope had given him authority. The British historians draw a frightful picture of the moral depravity of their countrymen. They charge their kings with the grossest acts of injustice, rapine, licentiousness, perjury, and murder; and they describe the clergy as being simoniacal, unchaste, arrogant, luxurious, and consequently incapable of correcting in the people those vices which they themselves practised². They were also animated by a bitter spirit of nationalism, withdrawing from all intercourse with the English, and making no attempt to convert them.

By Ethelbert's assistance a number of British bishops and learned men were assembled to meet Augustine at a place in Gloucestershire, on the borders of the Wiccii, a tribe of West Saxons, which was henceforth called Augustine's Ac, or oak, and is still known as Aust³. After entreating them to preserve

² *Epistola Gildæ*. Gale, pp. 10, 23. Book of Llandaff, pp. 139—180. Ap. Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, i. p. 13, and note B. p. 356.

³ Bede, ii. c. ii., note by Giles. This place was formerly called Austre Clive, and stands near the site of the Roman Vectis. Various dates, from A.D. 599 to A.D. 603, have been given for this meeting. The later dates appear to be the most probable, because Augustine's messengers to

Christian unity with him, and join him in preaching to the Pagans, Augustine proceeded to discuss with them various points, and especially the time of keeping Easter, in which they differed from the Catholic custom. The British bishops, however, clung obstinately to their own tradition, preferring it to that of all the other Churches in the world. At length, Augustine, finding that argument was useless, said, "Let us beseech God, who maketh men to be of one mind in a house, to declare to us by His heavenly tokens which tradition is to be followed. . . . Let some sick person be brought, and let the faith and practice of those by whose prayers he shall be healed, be looked upon as most acceptable to God, and be adopted by all." To this the Britons reluctantly consented. A blind Saxon was accordingly brought, and being taken to the British bishops they could do nothing for him. Whereupon Augustine falling on his knees, prayed that God would restore his sight, so that by the corporeal enlightening of one man the light of spiritual grace might be kindled in the hearts of many. Immediately the blind man received sight, and the British bishops confessed that Augustine taught the true way of righteousness. But they said that they could not depart from their ancient customs without the consent of their people; and they therefore desired that a second synod might be held, at which more of their number would assist.

This second conference took place at Bangor in

Rome did not return till A.D. 601, and Augustine would scarcely have gone to the Britons before he had received authority over them.

Flintshire, where there was a large monastery, containing no less than two thousand one hundred monks; who, divided into seven choirs, kept up the *Laus Perennis* day and night, and over whom presided Abbot Dinooth, who was universally respected for his great learning. Seven bishops also were present, for though there were only three bishoprics in Wales, some of the bishops who had fled from the English territory, still survived.

Before this second conference those who were to attend it, went to consult a hermit of great repute, whether they ought to forsake their own tradition in obedience to Augustine. The hermit answered, "If he be a man of God, follow him." "But how shall we know that he is a man of God?" they inquired. He replied, "Our Lord saith, 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart.' If, then, Augustine be meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ, and offers the same to you. But if he be stern and haughty, it appears that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his words." Still they insisted, "But how shall we discern even this?" "Contrive," answered the hermit, "that he shall arrive first at the place of meeting. If he rise as you draw near, then know that he is the servant of Christ, and hear and obey him. But if he despise you, and rise not to you, though you are more in number, let him also be despised by you."

They followed the hermit's advice, and managed that Augustine and his party should precede them at the

place of conference. When they arrived, Augustine was sitting in his chair, and, according to ecclesiastical custom, being their superior both as archbishop and as metropolitan of Britain, he did not rise to receive them. Hereupon they became very angry, and accusing him of pride, contradicted all that he said. In vain did he offer to allow them to retain their own customs, provided only they would keep Easter at the right time, administer baptism in the canonical form, and co-operate with him in preaching to the English. They would do none of these things, and refused to receive him as their archbishop. For they said among themselves, "If he would not now rise to us, how much more will he despise us as of no worth if we place ourselves under his authority." But Augustine before he departed addressed to them a solemn warning, saying, "If you will not join in unity with your brethren, you shall have war with your enemies. If you refuse to give the English the word of life, you will receive from them the vengeance of death."

These prophetic words were verified several years after, when S. Augustine was dead⁴. Ethelfrid, the warlike king of Northumbria, having invaded the British territory, was about to give them battle at Carlegion, or Chester, when he observed a large body of men standing apart in a place of safety. Inquiring who

⁴ Wharton proves that S. Augustine died A.D. 604; *Ang. Sac.*, i. p. 91. The earliest date assigned to this massacre is A.D. 607, as in the *Saxon Chronicle*; while Usher and the *Ulster Annals* place it A.D. 613. See note, Bede, ii. c. ii. p. 72. Also Lingard, ii. p. 71.

they were, and what they were doing there, he was told that they were priests from the monastery of Bangor, who, after fasting for three days, had come to pray for their people during the battle, under the protection of one Brocmail. Then Ethelfrid said, "If they cry to their God against us, though they do not bear arms, yet in truth they fight against us, because they oppose us by their prayers." He therefore ordered them to be attacked first, and Brocmail and his men taking to flight, twelve hundred⁵ of them were killed, and only fifty escaped. After which Ethelfrid totally routed the British army, and destroyed the monastery of Bangor.

Notwithstanding this terrible calamity, the Britons did not repent of their want of charity to their neighbors. They continued to treat the English, even after they became Christians, as an accursed race, no better than Pagans. They not only refused to pray with them, but they would not sit at table, or remain under the same roof with them, or return their salutation; and the fragments of food, of which an Englishman had partaken, they threw to the dogs and swine, even though they were blessed with the sign of the cross; and the vessels out of which he had eaten or drank, they would break as if desecrated, or purify them by passing them through the fire⁶. They continued their peculiar

⁵ Bede, ii. c. ii. p. 701. The Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 607, mentions only two hundred as being killed.

⁶ Ep. S. Aldhelm. ad Geront. inter Bonificianas, Wurdwein, 163. Serrarius, 44.

observance of Easter till the middle of the eighth century, when the Roman calculation was adopted in North Wales, and a few years after, A.D. 777, it extended to South Wales⁷.

After leaving Chester Augustine went on to York. During the whole journey he travelled on foot, attended only by a few monks, poorly clad like himself, entering any house that opened its door to him, and depending for his food on the hospitality of the barbarians. As he passed along, his majestic mien, for he was taller from the shoulders upwards than those around him, and his sweet and reverend countenance attracted notice. He preached God's word openly, and crowds gathered round him to hear the new doctrine and the sweet promises of that glorious kingdom which he proclaimed. And when it was found that he cured in the name of Jesus all the sick and infirm whom he met, numbers were brought to him to be healed. Thus, the farther he went the more numerous became his followers.

As he was about to enter York there lay by the roadside a blind and paralytic man, who, hearing the noise of the passing crowd, and being told its cause, cried clamorously, "Holy Saint, help me with thy marvellous power and pity." Then Augustine, remembering the words of his own Apostle, answered, "Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give thee. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise, and be healed." Scarcely had the words been uttered than the poor man looked up, and opening his eyelids beheld the

⁷ Lingard, vol. i. p. 63.

light of day, receiving at the same time the light of faith to believe in Him by whose power he was cured.

Followed by a wondering crowd Augustine entered York as in a triumphal procession. Here his preaching was so successful, that before he left the neighborhood he baptized several thousands⁸ in the river Swale, the number being so great, that the bystanders considered it a miracle, that amid the crowd and pressure of persons of both sexes and all ages, not a single one was drowned. A church was afterwards built on the spot to commemorate this glorious birth-day of the Northumbrian nation.

From York Augustine returned southwards, and passing through the western counties, went into Dorsetshire, rather as a hunter seeking to capture souls for God, than as a weary traveller hastening to his home. Hitherto his progress had been a continuous triumph; but in Dorsetshire he met with a far different reception. In one of the seaport towns the people, who were mostly fishermen, tied the tails of ray-fish to the garments of the monks, and pursued them with jeers and insults, throwing stones and filth at them, and dealing heavy blows on them. At length the monks finding them deaf to remonstrance, shook the dust from their feet, and departed. At another place the people seemed to be devils rather than men. While

⁸ Vit. S. Augustin. c. xvii. note. Gotcelin says that ten thousand were baptized on Christmas Day, but it is evident from the context that he confuses this occasion with the baptism in Kent on Christmas Day, A.D. 597.

Augustine preached to them, they cried out, "Depart from us ; we want not the knowledge of thy ways ; we have made a compact with death." Some drew their swords to kill him, others lighted torches to set fire to his clothes, and others again poured out upon him abuse and bitter, mocking words. Undaunted, Augustine continued to preach, till at length in despair of touching them by his own weak words, he prayed aloud to God to lay His mighty hand upon them. Suddenly a terrible malady broke out in the town, and men and women, young and old, children and parents, all were struck with burning ulcers, and a long wild wail of agony rang through the place. Then those who had been foremost in despising Augustine, were the first to cry to him for mercy. One after another they fell at his feet, and besought him to pity and pardon them. As he instructed them his heavenly words of peace soothed their sufferings ; and with the water of baptism they were healed both in body and soul.

Five miles distant was a dry and desert spot, whither Augustine and his companions retired to pray. Here, as a compensation for his late sufferings, our Lord appeared to him, saying, "My good and faithful servant, have courage and act boldly. For I the Lord thy God am always with thee, and My ears are ever open to thy prayers to grant whatsoever thou dost ask. The gate of eternal life is open to thee, where thou shalt rejoice with Me for ever." Rapt in ecstasy, Augustine adored the loving Lord, who thus tenderly compassionated His servants ; and he called the place

Cernel, from the Latin word *cerno*, I see, and El, the Hebrew name of God. On this spot was afterwards erected the Abbey of Cerne or Cerne-Abbas in memory of this vision.

S. Augustine's supernatural gifts seem to have been of a high order, as is attested by S. Gregory's letters, by his biographers Bede and Gotcelin, and by the inscription on his tomb, which was to be seen when Bede wrote. In a letter to the Patriarch of Alexandria S. Gregory referred to them, saying, "News has just reached me of his well-being and wonderful deeds; so that either he, or those who were sent with him, have so shone out by the gift of miracles among this people, that they seem to be like the Apostles in the signs they have wrought^a." To Augustine, however, he wrote in a far different tone. "I know, most loving brother," he says, "that Almighty God, by your means, shows great miracles in the nation which He has chosen. Wherefore it is necessary that you rejoice with fear, and tremble whilst you rejoice on account of the same heavenly gift; namely, rejoice because the souls of the Angles are by outward miracles drawn to inward grace; but fear lest, amidst the wonders that are wrought, your weak mind may be puffed up in its own presumption, and as it is externally raised to honor, it may thence inwardly fall by vainglory. . . It remains, therefore, most dear brother, that amidst these things, which, through the working of our Lord, you outwardly perform, you always inwardly strictly judge yourself,

^a Vit. S. Augustin. c. xxxix.

and clearly understand both what you are yourself, and how much grace is in that same nation, for the conversion of which you have received the gift of working miracles. And if you remember that you have at any time offended our Creator either by word or deed, call it to mind, to the end that the remembrance of your guilt may crush the vanity which rises in your heart. And whatsoever you shall receive, or have received in relation to working miracles, consider the same, not as conferred on you, but on those for whose salvation it has been given you¹."

After Augustine's return to Canterbury, he had the happiness of introducing the faith into the adjoining kingdom of Essex. This kingdom seems to have been more completely under Ethelfrid's authority than the others, and he had placed his nephew Sabert, the son of his sister Ricola², on its throne. So careful was Ethelfrid not to force the new faith even on those most closely connected with him, that Sabert was not baptized till A.D. 604; and neither his own son Eadbald nor Sabert's sons, were baptized during his lifetime.

Ethelbert had also given Augustine the means to found a bishopric at Rochester, the second city in the kingdom of Kent, and to build in it a church, which he dedicated to S. Andrew. Augustine now consecrated Mellitus Bishop of London, and Justus Bishop of Rochester; and in virtue of an extraordinary privilege,

¹ Bede, l. i. c. xxxi. p. 57.

² Palgrave, *Hist. Anglo-Saxons*, c. iii. p. 50.

never granted to any other bishop³, in anticipation of his own death, though still in good health, he consecrated, either at this time or previously, Laurentius as his successor. These were the last public acts of his life.

He died on the 26th of May, A.D. 604⁴, and was temporarily buried, according to Roman custom, by the side of the great Roman road from Dover to Canterbury, where now stands the Kent and Canterbury Hospital⁵. In the year 613, when the Abbey of S. Peter and S. Paul was finished, his body was removed to the place in the north porch, or apse, which he had prepared for himself; and in the year 1300 it was again translated by Abbot Fyndon, and placed under the High Altar⁶. The epitaph on his tomb was as follows: "Here rests the Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who, being formerly sent hither by the blessed Gregory, Bishop of the city of Rome, and by God's assistance supported with miracles, reduced King Ethelbert and his nation from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ, and having ended the days of his office in peace, died the 26th of May, in the reign of the same king." S. Gregory, whose name is so united

³ Vit. S. Augustin. l. i. c. 50. Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. i.* p. 518. "Nemo rite hoc fecit post Petrum, nemo incompetenter faciat post Augustinum."

⁴ *Anglia Sacra*, i. p. 91. Some place his death A.D. 605, two months after S. Gregory, instead of before him, as Bede implies. Giles' note, Bede, l. ii. c. ii. p. 72.

⁵ Stanley, c. i. p. 26.

⁶ Bede, ii. c. iii. p. 73, note by Giles. Stanley says that the last translation was made in the twelfth century, c. i. p. 26.

with his, did not long survive him, dying on the 12th March, A.D. 605.

The chief event in the remaining twelve years of Ethelbert's reign, was the establishment of religion in London, which even then was a great commercial mart. Sabert gave Mellitus Thorny Island and the adjoining waste and marshy land, and built for him a church dedicated to S. Peter, which in course of centuries became the Abbey of S. Peter at Westminster. He afterwards gave him a piece of land in a more central position, and on it Ethelbert built a church dedicated to S. Paul, as the cathedral church of the bishops of London.

Queen Bertha died before her husband, and when the Abbey of S. Peter and S. Paul was finished, her body was placed in S. Martin's porch or apse, on the south side of the altar, S. Luidhard being laid on its north side⁷.

After her death Ethelbert married a young and beautiful wife. He died A.D. 616, after a reign of fifty years, and was buried beside her who had first drawn him to the faith, and at no great distance from the spiritual father who had regenerated him in holy baptism.

All had hitherto prospered with the Church in England, and never had Christianity made its way at less cost of labor and suffering. But on the death of Ethelbert troubles arose. His son and successor, Eadbald, not only rejected the faith, but being captivated by the beauty of his father's widow, he insisted on marrying her. He was, moreover, possessed by an

⁷ Stanley, c. i. p. 26.

evil spirit, and was subject to frequent fits of madness. His example emboldened others, who had either embraced Christianity from worldly motives, or had since given way to their passions, to abjure their new faith and relapse into the idolatry and immorality of their Pagan ancestors.

The death of Sabert increased the evil. For his three sons who inherited his kingdom, and who, though unbaptized, had appeared, during their father's lifetime, to be well disposed to Christianity, now openly professed idolatry and encouraged their subjects to do the same. Notwithstanding, when they saw Mellitus give holy Communion to his flock, they would exclaim, "Why do you not give us also that white bread which you used to give to our father Saba, and which you still give to the people in the church?" For the altar-bread then, as now, was not common bread, but was unleavened, and in the form of very white, thin, round, stamped wafers^s. And when Mellitus tried to explain to them that they could not receive the Bread of eternal life, unless they would consent to be washed from their sins in that laver of baptism in which their father had been washed, they replied, "We will not enter into that laver, because we do not know that we stand in need of it; but yet we will eat of that bread." At last finding that Mellitus was inflexible, they became very angry, and said, "If you will not comply with our wishes in so small a matter, you shall not stay in our dominions." They accordingly drove out Mellitus

^s Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. Preface, c. liii.

and his followers, who retired to Laurentius in Kent. These three unhappy young men were soon after killed in a battle with the West Saxons, and their people, who had relapsed into idolatry, continuing obdurate, thirty-five years elapsed before Christianity again found its way into the kingdom of Essex.

In Kent matters became worse from day to day, and at last the bishops arrived at the conclusion that they had better all return to their own country. Mellitus and Justus, with most of the monks, crossed over to France, intending to wait there to see the course of events; and Laurentius prepared to follow them. The night before the day fixed for his departure, he had his bed placed in the abbey church of S. Peter and S. Paul. Long and bitterly did he weep over the ruin of that work, which had been his sole joy upon earth; and fervently did he pray for those wandering sheep, whom he loved better than his own life. At last he lay down to rest, and fell asleep. In the dead of night S. Peter stood by his side, and scourging him severely, said, "Why wouldst thou forsake the flock which I have committed to thee? To what shepherds wilt thou commit Christ's sheep, who are in the midst of wolves? Hast thou forgotten my example, who, for the sake of those little ones whom Christ recommended to me in token of His love, endured bonds, stripes, imprisonment, and even the death of the cross, that I might at last be crowned with Him?" With the early dawn Laurentius went to the king, and taking off his habit, showed him the marks of the stripes. Eadbald, in great sur-

prise, asked who had dared to touch a man of such high rank. When Laurentius told him his tale, he was horror struck and filled with remorse for the sins which had caused such suffering to so holy a man; and renouncing Paganism, he put away his father's widow, and after receiving baptism, continued during the rest of his life to promote Christianity by every means in his power.

Mellitus, Justus, and their companions, now returned to England. Justus resumed his see of Rochester, and a few years after, A.D. 619, Mellitus succeeded Laurentius as Archbishop of Canterbury. He died A.D. 624, and was succeeded by Justus. From this time Christianity made such steady progress in Kent, that Eadbald was able before his death, A.D. 640, to forbid the performance of idolatrous rites, and to establish the Lent fast throughout his kingdom⁹.

⁹ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an. 640.

CHAPTER II.

CONVERSION OF NORTHUMBRIA.

THE second English kingdom which was permanently converted, was Northumbria. It will be remembered that Ælla was the King of Deira when S. Gregory noticed the young Angles in the slave-market of Rome. When he died, A.D. 588¹, his son Edwin being only three years old, his kingdom was seized by Ethelric, King of Bernicia, who dying A.D. 593², was succeeded by his son Ethelfrid, a prince of great prowess and military renown. As Edwin grew to manhood, he was remarkable for his talents and his virtues, excelling in all martial exercises, and winning universal love by his sweet and noble disposition, so that Ethelfrid became jealous of him³, and he had to fly for his life to Cearl, King of Mercia, whose daughter, Quenberga, he had married. But Ethelfrid's enmity pursued him, and for many years he had to move from place to place, till at length he threw himself on the generosity of Redwald, King of the East Angles, who promised to

¹ Anglo-Saxon Chron. an. 588.

² Ibid., an. 593.

³ Bede, l. ii. c. xii. p. 91; c. xiv. p. 97.

protect him. Still Ethelfrid persecuted him, offering Redwald a sum of money if he would murder him. But Redwald was true to his word, and rejected the bribe. Hereupon Ethelfrid sent a second and a third time, offering larger and larger sums; till at length he threatened to invade East Anglia. Then Redwald was terrified, for Ethelfrid had already defeated both the Scots and the Britons; and at last he reluctantly promised either to kill Edwin, or deliver him up to Ethelfrid.

Edwin had a trusty friend, who, becoming aware of Redwald's intention, came to him at the first hour of the night, while he was going to bed; and calling him out, told him of the danger that threatened him, adding, "If, therefore, thou thinkest fit, I will this very hour conduct thee out of this province, and lead thee to a place where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid shall ever find thee." But Edwin answered, "I cannot flee away, and break the compact that I have made with Redwald, when he has done me no injury. If I must die, let it be by his hand, rather than by that of any meaner person. For whither shall I now fly, who have for so many years been a fugitive through all the provinces of Britain from the hand of my enemies?" When the friend found that he could not persuade him to throw off the friendship of one who had been his benefactor, he went away; and Edwin being left alone, remained in the open air, and sitting down before the palace, he began to be overwhelmed with anguish, not knowing what to do, or which way to turn.

When he had sat thus a long time in silence⁴, brooding over his misfortunes, on a sudden in the dead of night, he saw a person, whose face and habit were equally strange, approaching him, at which unexpected sight he was not a little frightened. The stranger, coming close up to him, saluted him, and said, "Why sittest thou here alone and melancholy, when all others are taking their rest?" Edwin in his turn asked, "What is it to thee whether I spend the night within doors or abroad?" Whereupon the stranger answered, "Think not that I am ignorant of the cause of thy grief, thy watching, and sitting alone without. For I know who thou art, and why thou grieveest, and the evils which thou fearest. Tell me, then, what reward thou wilt give the man who shall deliver thee from this danger, and persuade Redwald neither to do thee any harm himself, nor to deliver thee up to be murdered by thine enemies?" Edwin replied, "There is nothing in my power that I will not do in return for so singular a favor." The stranger asked again, "What if I also assure thee, that thou shalt overcome thine enemies, and surpass in power, not only all thine ancestors, but even all who have reigned before thee over the Angles?" Edwin did not hesitate to promise that he would make a suitable return to so great a benefactor. Then said the other, "But if he who foretells so much good to thee, can also give thee better advice for thy life and salvation than any of thy forefathers or kindred ever heard of, dost thou promise to submit to him, and

⁴ Bede, l. ii. c. xii. p. 92.

follow his salutary counsel?" Edwin readily promised to obey in all things the man who should deliver him from so many calamities, and raise him to a throne. On receiving this answer, the stranger laid his hand on Edwin's head, saying, "When this sign shall be given thee, remember our discourse, and delay not to perform what thou now promisest." With which words he suddenly vanished.

While Edwin still sat alone, glad of the comfort that he had received, but wondering, and seriously considering who was the mysterious stranger, and whence he came, his friend returned, and saluting him with a smiling countenance, told him that Redwald had been persuaded by his queen not to sacrifice his honor by giving up his guest, and that his life was now safe.

Ethelfrid, enraged at Redwald's obstinate refusal of his request, declared war against him. But Redwald hastening to attack him before he could assemble all his forces, he was totally defeated and killed in a great battle fought on the banks of the Idle in Nottinghamshire, A.D. 617⁵. Redwald now took the first place among the English kings, being chosen Bretwalda in succession to Ethelbert, who was lately dead.

With Redwald's assistance Edwin not only recovered his father's throne of Deira, but also that of Bernicia, Ethelfrid's three sons being obliged to fly to Scotland. He also, A.D. 620, took the territory about Leeds from

⁵ English Saints, S. Edwin, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 27.

the Britons. In the following year, in the course of a war against Ferquard, King of the Picts, he extended his frontier to the Frith of Forth, where he founded the town of Edwinsburg, or Edinburgh; and the year after he conquered the Isles of Man and Anglesea. Two years later, A.D. 624, Redwald dying, the East Angles offered him their throne; but remembering his debt of gratitude to that monarch, he refused it in favor of Redwald's son Eorpwald. He, however, succeeded Redwald as Bretwalda, and his power was greater than that of any of his predecessors; so that he assumed some of the state belonging to the Roman emperors, being preceded, even in time of peace, by his standard-bearer, who carried before him a globe, or a tuft of feathers fixed on a spear. Thus were fulfilled the promises of his celestial visitant, far beyond what he could ever have dreamt of.

And now there came a great crisis in his life. His wife Quenberga being dead, he sent to ask in marriage Ethelberga, the daughter of Ethelbert and Bertha. At first her brother Eadbald refused his proposal, because he was a Pagan, while she was a Christian. But when he promised to allow her and all her attendants to practise their religion, adding that he would himself embrace Christianity, if, after examination by wise persons, it should be found more holy and more worthy of God than the religion of his ancestors, she was given to him, and became his wife. Paulinus, one of the monks whom S. Gregory had sent to S. Augustine, was now consecrated Bishop of the Northumbrians by

Archbishop Justus, A.D. 625⁶, and accompanied Ethelberga to Northumbria.

Edwin's offer to examine the Christian doctrines, and embrace them if they were approved by his advisers, leads to the supposition that he had already heard of the new religion, either from some of S. Augustine's numerous converts, whom he might have fallen in with in his wanderings, or at Redwald's court. For Redwald, during a visit to Kent, had been baptized; but on his return home he had been persuaded by his wife and the Pagan priests to fall back into idolatry, having in the same temple a large altar on which he offered sacrifice to Christ, and a smaller one for the victims offered to his demon gods⁷. Edwin, however, did not at once respond to Paulinus's efforts to convert him. Nor was he convinced by two beautiful letters which Pope Boniface IV. wrote to him and Ethelberga, pointing out to him the inanity of his own idol-worship in contrast with the sublime mysteries of Christianity, and exhorting Ethelberga to great zeal for the conversion of him who was now a part of herself.

At length several circumstances occurred which combined to awaken Edwin's conscience⁸. In the year 626, he had a very narrow escape from the poisoned dagger of an assassin, whom Cuichelm, King of the West Saxons, had sent to murder him. He owed his life only to the devotion of one of his attendants, Lilla, who seeing the villain about to strike, and having no

⁶ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 625.

⁷ Bede, l. ii. c. xv. p. 98.

⁸ Ibid., l. ii. c. x. p. 85.

shield, interposed his own body to save his lord. But the blow was struck so home, that it wounded Edwin through Lilla's body; and in the ensuing confusion, before the assassin could be seized, another of his soldiers, called Forthere, was killed.

About the same time Ethelberga gave birth to a daughter; and while Edwin returned thanks to his gods, Paulinus tried to persuade him that it was to his prayers to our Lord, that his thanks were owing for the health and safety of the mother and child. Edwin was so struck with the holy bishop's words, that he promised, if God should give him life and victory against Cuichelm, he would become a Christian; and in proof of his sincerity he gave his little daughter, Eanfled, to be baptized by Paulinus. Victory was granted him, and on his return home he gave up the worship of idols. But being of a very thoughtful character, he could not all at once embrace the new faith; and he would frequently confer with the wisest of his counsellors, and would often be seen to sit apart in silent and deep deliberation as to the course that he ought to pursue.

While he was in this painful state of doubt, what had occurred when he was in exile at Redwald's court, was revealed to Paulinus. He forthwith went to Edwin, and finding him, as usual, sitting apart in deep thought, he placed his hand on his head, and asked him whether he knew that sign. Startled and trembling, Edwin would have fallen at the saint's feet; but Paulinus, raising him, said earnestly, "Behold, by God's grace you have escaped the hands of your enemies, and by

His gift you have obtained the kingdom that you desired. Take heed not to delay that which you promised to perform. Embrace the faith, and keep the precepts of Him who, delivering you from temporal adversity, has raised you to the honor of a temporal kingdom; and if henceforth you are obedient to His will, which through me He signifies to you, He will deliver you from the everlasting torments of the wicked, and make you partaker of His eternal kingdom in heaven."

With the consent of Paulinus Edwin called a council of his principal friends and advisers, in order that if they were of one mind with him, they might all be baptized together. When they were assembled he asked each of them what he thought of the new doctrine and worship, and their answers revealed their state of doubt and thoughtful anxiety. Coifi, the chief priest, was the first to answer⁹, saying, "O king, consider what is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you that it seems to me that the religion we have hitherto practised, has no power. For no one has worshipped our gods more diligently than I, and yet there are many who receive greater favor from you, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if the gods were good for any thing, they would rather forward me, who have been most careful to serve them. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination you find those new doctrines, which are now preached

⁹ Bede, l. ii. c. xiii. p. 94.

to us, better and more efficacious, we should immediately receive them without any delay."

Then another of the chief men said, "The present life, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter with your generals and counsellors, with a good fire in the midst, while the storms of rain and snow are whirling about out of doors. The sparrow, flying in by one door and immediately out by another, is safe from the storm while he is within; but this brief moment of quiet being past, he quickly vanishes from your sight into the dark winter whence he came. So this life of man appears for a short space; but what shall follow, or what went before, we know nothing of. Wherefore, if this new doctrine inform us any more certainly about it, it seems worthy of being followed."

All the other wise men and chiefs spoke in the same strain. But Coifi wishing to hear more about the new God, Paulinus fully explained the Christian faith to the council. After hearing his words, Coifi exclaimed, "I have long felt that there was nothing in that which we worshipped, for the more diligently I sought after truth the less I found it. But now I freely confess, that such truth evidently appears in this preaching as can confer on us the gifts of life, salvation, and eternal happiness. Wherefore I advise, O king, that we instantly abjure and set fire to these temples and altars, which we have consecrated without reaping any benefit from them." Then the question arose who

should first profane the idol temples and altars. Whereupon Coifi answered, "I will be the first to do so; for who is fitter than I to set an example to all, and to destroy, through the wisdom that God has given me, those things which I worshipped through ignorance?" Forthwith, in contempt of his former superstition, he asked the king for a horse and spear, for it was forbidden to a Pagan priest to bear arms, or ride any but a mare. Having girt a sword about him, with a lance in his hand, he mounted the horse and rode to the idol temple. When the people saw him thus riding along they thought he was mad, but heeding them not, he galloped on to the temple, which he desecrated by throwing his spear into it; and then, rejoicing in the knowledge of God, he bade his companions burn down the whole building. This temple stood at Godmundingham, or Goodmanham, near the river Derwent, in the East Riding of Yorkshire¹.

Edwin and all his nobility, and many of the common people, were baptized at York, on Easter Day, the 12th of April, A.D. 627. As soon as he was baptized, he took care to build a handsome stone church, within which was enclosed the small wooden baptistery dedicated to S. Peter, in which he had been baptized. He also gave the city of York to Paulinus as the seat of his bishopric, according to S. Gregory's appointment; and Pope Honorius, who had succeeded Boniface IV.,

¹ Bede, l. ii. c. xiii. p. 96, note by Giles.

sent him a pall as metropolitan of those bishoprics which he hoped he would found in the north.

Edwin's fervor was now proportionate to the long consideration which had preceded his conversion, and he and Ethelberga accompanied Paulinus when he went about preaching. So eagerly did the people listen to Paulinus, and so great was their desire for baptism, that on one occasion, when he was with the king and queen at a royal country-seat at Yeverin in Glendale, near Wooler in Northumberland, he was occupied for thirty-six days from morning to night, instructing and baptizing in the river Glen² the people who flocked to him from all the neighboring towns and villages. He also baptized a great multitude of the Deiri in the rocky pools of the river Swale, at Catterick Bridge, formerly called Cataruct, where he often went with the king.

But Edwin's zeal was not confined within the limits of his own kingdom. He was "so zealous for the worship of truth, that he persuaded Eorpwald," King of East Anglia, "to abandon his idolatrous superstitions, and with his whole province to receive the faith and sacraments of Christ" A.D. 632. He also took Paulinus across the Humber into the province of Lindsey, a part of Lincolnshire which belonged to the Pagan kingdom of Mercia, when Blecca, the Governor of Lincoln, and his family, were the first converts. They also went into Nottinghamshire, where at Southwell Paulinus baptized in Edwin's presence a great number of per-

² Now called the Bowent.

sons in the Trent. This was told to Bede by Deda, the Abbot of Parteney, a cell of Bardney Abbey, who heard it from a very old man who had been among the baptized. This old man described Paulinus as being tall, with a slight stoop, his hair black, his face thin, his nose slender and aquiline, and his aspect both venerable and majestic. He was accompanied by James the deacon, a man of great zeal and sanctity, who lived to a very great age, and from whom Bede seems to have received the account of Edwin's conversion, which he gives in such detail³.

Paulinus built in Lincoln "a stone church of beautiful workmanship," in which he consecrated Honorius, the fifth Archbishop of Canterbury, about A.D. 630⁴, in accordance with the provision of S. Gregory, giving power to the survivor of the two English archbishops to consecrate a successor to the one lately deceased, an arrangement which Pope Honorius confirmed. Besides the two stone churches at York and Lincoln, which have given place to the present beautiful cathedrals, he also built another stone church at Southwell, dedicated to our Blessed Lady⁵, and one at Campodonum⁶, where Edwin's palace stood. Also, in the parish church of Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, there may now be

³ Bede, l. ii. c. xvi. p. 100.

⁴ There is a dispute about this date. The year 630 is given from Smith, Giles' note to Bede, l. ii. c. xvii. p. 102; English Saints, S. Paulinus, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 12.

⁵ English Saints, S. Paulinus, p. 11.

⁶ Giles says this place was Doncaster, or Castle Hill, near Almondbury, but Gale thinks it was Tanfield, near Ripon. Bede, l. ii. c. xiv. p. 98, note.

seen a cross, the facsimile of an ancient one which was removed within the memory of persons still living; and on this cross is the inscription, "Paulinus hic prædicavit et celebravit."

Edwin's missionary zeal did not distract his attention from his duties as a king. He took such care for the good of his people, that he erected fountains near the highways, with brass drinking-vessels attached to them; and so great was the love and fear that he inspired, that none dared use them for any other purpose. So excellent was his government, that perfect peace and order reigned wherever his power extended, so that it became a proverb, that a woman with her new-born babe might walk through the island from sea to sea without receiving any injury.

For six years all went prosperously, and Christianity began to take hold on the northern and midland counties, as well as on East Anglia. But in the year 633 there came a great reverse. Ceadwalla, King of the Britons, formed a league with Penda, the Pagan King of Mercia, against Edwin. They invaded Northumbria, and in a great battle fought at Heathfield, or Hatfield, in the West Riding, on the 14th of October, A.D. 633, Edwin was killed. One of his sons by Quenberga being killed, and the other taken prisoner by Penda, who afterwards treacherously murdered him, and Wuscfrea, his son by Ethelberga, being an infant, he was succeeded in Deira by his cousin Osric, and in Bernicia by Eanfrid, one of Ethelfrid's sons. Eanfrid and his brothers, on Edwin's accession, had fled to

Scotland, where they had been educated by the Irish monks in the Christian faith. But no sooner did he and Osric take possession of their respective kingdoms, than they openly apostatized and restored the old Pagan worship.

Nor was this the full extent of the calamity. For Eorpwald, King of East Anglia, was killed about this time by Richbert, a Pagan, and idolatry was re-established in his kingdom. Thus it seemed as if S. Paulinus's labors and S. Edwin's zeal had all been in vain.

The lives of Ethelberga and her children being now in danger, Paulinus took them to Kent, where they were kindly received by her brother Eadbald. She sent her son Wuscfrea, and Iffi, the grandson of Edwin and Quenberga, to be educated by her mother's kinsman, King Dagobert, in France, where both died in childhood. With her brother's assistance she built a monastery at Liming, where she exchanged her crown for the nun's veil, thus setting a saintly example, which so many English kings and queens joyfully followed. In the Martyrology she is called the mother of many virgins and widows, and of her it has been beautifully said, that "she put on her earthly crown for love of Christ, she wore it for His Church, she put it off for the greater love she bore Him, and she now reigns with Him in heaven⁷."

As for Paulinus, Archbishop Honorius gave him the see of Rochester, which just then fell vacant, and here he died, A.D. 644.

⁷ English Saints, S. Ethelberga, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 48.

Meanwhile terrible calamities fell upon the Northumbrians. Multitudes of them were massacred by Penda and Ceadwalla; and after Penda retired, Ceadwalla killed both Osric and Eanfrid, and held the country for a year, ruling "not merely like a victorious king" in barbarous times, "but like a rapacious and bloody tyrant." He spared neither age nor sex; but with savage cruelty put even women and children to death in torturing ways, ravaging the country with the intent of exterminating the Angles, and taking no heed to their being Christians, and fellow-members of Christ with himself, so that he was said, with truth, to be worse even than the Pagans⁸.

During this time of suffering and confusion it was impossible to restore Christian worship, or afford the consolations of religion to the persecuted race. Flying from place to place, or hid in forests and mountain caves, they could do little more than seek to prolong life from day to day. The only help they had came from James, the holy deacon whom Paulinus had left behind him at York, where, and at Catterick, he continued to teach and baptize, and "rescued much prey from the power of the enemy of mankind⁹."

Severe as was this trial to the infant Church, it was of short duration. On the death of Eanfrid the hopes of the Northumbrians rested on his younger brother Oswald. Hard as must have been to this young prince the seventeen years spent in exile during Edwin's reign, and harder far the sorrowful year of his brother's

⁸ Bede, l. iii. c. i. p. 109.

⁹ Ibid. l. ii. c. xx. p. 108.

apostasy, yet to him these trials were highly blessed. In his painful exile he received the faith of Christ, and his sorrows and sufferings made him, through God's grace, a glorious saint and martyr.

After Eanfrid's death he collected an army, few in number, but strong in faith and hope; and with them he advanced to a place called Denisesburn¹, not far from Hexham, where he met Ceadwalla and his army. The night before the battle Oswald caused a rude cross of wood to be erected upon a field, close to Ceadwalla's camp, which even then was called Heavenfield²; and as all had to be done in haste, Oswald helped the work with his own hand, holding the cross erect while his men threw the earth round its foot. As soon as it stood firm, Oswald cried with a loud voice to his army, "Let us all kneel down and pray to the true and living God Almighty, mercifully to defend us from our proud and fierce enemy; for He knoweth that ours is a just war for the safety of our nation." Then all knelt and prayed. This done, they retired to rest.

During the night Oswald slept soundly. And as he slept, S. Columba, whose monks had been his spiritual fathers, appeared to him and promised him not only victory in the morrow's fight, but also a happy reign³.

¹ Some identify this place with Dilston. Bede, l. iii. c. i. p. 109.

² Smith says that Hallington, a mile north of Bingley, was anciently called Havenfelth, or Heavenfield. Appendix to Bede, p. 730. Ap. Giles' note, Bede, p. 110.

³ English Saints, S. Oswald, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 53. Oswald himself told this vision to Failbey, Abbot of Iona, who told it to S. Adamnan, his successor, who mentions it in his Life of S. Columba.

At the first break of dawn he advanced with his little band to the place where his cross stood, and falling on the Britons, completely defeated them, Ceadwalla himself being killed in the battle. This cross, which was the first erected in Bernicia, for neither church nor altar had yet been built there, was long venerated for its miraculous powers. About A.D. 673 S. Wilfrid founded a monastery and built a beautiful church at Hexham, and every year, on the eve of the anniversary of the battle in which Oswald was afterwards killed, the monks of Hexham watched through the night at this cross, and prayed for his soul.

This victory having given Oswald possession of the kingdom, his first care was to provide his people with Christian teachers. He naturally turned to the monks of Iona, and asked them to send him a bishop. They accordingly sent him Corman, a very holy man, but of a narrow, austere spirit, who could make no impression on the Angles, and soon returned home, declaring that it was impossible to do them any good, because they were so uncivilized and stubborn. The monks of Iona were loath to give up this nation who had asked for the faith; and they assembled a great council to consult on the matter. Then Corman stated his experience; whereupon another of the monks, called Aidan, said, "Brother, it seems to me that thou wert too severe with thy unlearned hearers, and didst not, according to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till, nourished gradually with the word of God, they should be capable of greater perfec-

tion." So true and wise was this remark, that all the monks concluded, that none could be more fit than Aidan to be the teacher of these rude Angles. Accordingly he was sent to Oswald, who gave him Lindisfarne for his episcopal see; and from this Holy Island, as it was rightly called, went forth a race of saints who quickly converted all the people of Northumbria.

In East Anglia the eclipse of the faith, though it continued longer than in Northumbria, did not last above three years. In the year 636, Sigebert, brother of Eorpwald, obtained possession of the throne. He had been banished by his father, Redwald, for some unknown cause, and had continued in disgrace during his brother's reign. During his exile he had been converted; and he now returned home as a Christian. He spared no pains to spread Christianity among his subjects, and with the assistance of S. Felix, a Burgundian priest, whom Archbishop Honorius consecrated a bishop and sent to him, he succeeded in converting the whole of his kingdom. He gave S. Felix the city of Dommoc, or Dunwich, for his episcopal see; and though this city has been submerged by the advance of the German Ocean, the village of Felixstow, or "the dwelling of Felix," on the coast of Suffolk, still remains as a memorial of the holy bishop. Sigebert was not only remarkable for his saintly spirit, but also for his love of learning. Wishing to imitate the good institutions that he had seen abroad, he established a school for youth at either Dunwich or Seaham, in which he placed

able teachers, whom S. Felix procured for him from France. Thus was East Anglia also permanently won to Christianity; and from this time Paganism became extinct both in that kingdom and in Northumbria.

CHAPTER III.

CONVERSION OF WESSEX, MERCIA, ESSEX, AND SUSSEX.

THE very same year, A.D. 634, that the light of Christianity was extinguished in Northumbria, it shone out at the other extremity of England. For the missionary zeal of the Roman Church was truly that fire which our Lord threw on the earth, and which could not be quenched ; but when it was smothered in one quarter, it only blazed forth the more brightly in the opposite direction.

In the year 634 S. Birinus landed on the south coast of England. Nothing is known of his previous life, and it is even doubtful whether he was a monk¹. He is first heard of as asking leave of Pope Honorius to go and preach the faith in the remote parts of England, beyond the region whither it had been already carried. Honorius granted his request, and gave authority to Asterius, Bishop of Genoa, to consecrate him a bishop.

It is narrated² that when he was embarking for

¹ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. Index Sanct. prætermis.

² Wilhelm. Malm. De Gest. Pontif. l. ii. Ap. Milner, History of Winchester, c. vi. p. 68.

Britain from some port on the coast of Gaul, he forgot, in the hurry of departure, to take with him the Blessed Sacrament, which pious travellers in those perilous times, were accustomed to carry in their breast, as the palladium of both soul and body. As soon as he remembered his omission, he entreated the captain to put back and let him go ashore. But the wind was fair, and the captain and crew, who were Pagans, only laughed at his proposal. In the extremity of distress he threw his cloak upon the waves, and jumping upon it, was carried quickly to land; whence, after getting the Blessed Sacrament, he was borne back in safety to the ship. The sailors received him as a demi-god rather than a man; and on reaching England they published the wonderful act that they had witnessed. Crowds flocked to see him, and thus his Christian doctrine found ready entrance into the hearts of his hearers.

Whether this story be true or not, there is no doubt that his preaching was successful. Finding that there were no Christian teachers among the West Saxon Huicci, or Wiccii, who inhabited the counties of Gloucester, Worcester, and part of Warwick, he thought it better to preach to them than to go further in quest of hearers. Before long he obtained admission to Cynegils, the king, and he was so fortunate as to have an able coadjutor in Oswald, King of Northumbria, who had come to Cynegils' court to marry his daughter. Under their joint influence Cynegils received the faith, and was baptized A.D. 635. Oswald was his sponsor, thus being the spiritual father of him, whose

son he afterwards became by marrying his daughter. Many of the West Saxons were baptized at the same time.

Cynegils now gave S. Birinus for his episcopal see, the town of Dorcic, or Dorchester, about eight miles from Oxford; and Oswald, having succeeded Edwin as Bretwalda, confirmed the gift. The year after, A.D. 636, S. Birinus baptized Cuichelm, son of Cynegils; and three years later, A.D. 639, Cuthred, the son of Cuichelm, both of whom had the royal title³; for the government of the West Saxons was divided among the members of the royal tribe, who were styled kings, while over all these "under-rulers⁴," as they were sometimes called, presided one who bore the title of King of the West Saxons.

In the year 643 Cynegils died, and was succeeded as the king of the whole nation, by his son Cenwealh, who had always rejected the faith. Two years after, having put away his wife, who was the sister of Penda, King of the Mercians, and married another, Penda invaded Wessex and drove him out of the kingdom. Cenwealh retired to the court of Anna, King of the East Angles, with whom he remained for three years. Here, in his adversity, and through his intercourse with Anna's family of saints, he received the faith which he had rejected in his prosperity, and was baptized A.D. 646.

During the five years which intervened from the death of Cynegils to the restoration of Cenwealh, A.D. 648, Paganism must have been triumphant; and

³ Anglo-Sax. Chron. ann. 636. 638. 648.

⁴ Bede, l. iv. c. xii. p. 191.

yet Christianity had already taken so firm and deep a hold on the West Saxons, that during this period S. Birinus continued in possession of his episcopal city of Dorchester. In the year 648 Cenwealh recovered his throne, and his first act was to cause a minster to be built at Winchester and dedicated to S. Peter⁵. S. Birinus died A.D. 650, and was buried at Dorchester; but in the time of Hedda, his fourth successor, when the see was removed to Winchester, and the cathedral was finished, his body was carried thither. The baptism of Cynegils by S. Birinus is still to be seen in the carving of an old font in Winchester Cathedral⁶.

The Mercians, or Middle Saxons, and the East Saxons, embraced Christianity about twenty years later than the West Saxons; and both, in the year 653, through the zeal of S. Oswy, the brother and successor of S. Oswald.

The kingdom of the Mercians, or march men, was formed of various tribes who dwelt on the march or border of the other kingdoms. Its nucleus was several tribes of Angles, such as the Lindisfaras and Gainas in Lincolnshire, each under its own ealdorman or king, which were formed into a compact state by Penda, who ascended the throne, A.D. 628. But as the kingdom increased in power and extent, it included the British Magesætas in Herefordshire, the Saxon Huiccii or Wiccii in Gloucester, Worcester, and part of Warwickshire, till, in the following century, it became one of

⁵ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 648.

⁶ Bede, l. iii. c. vii. p. 119, note.

the largest English kingdoms, embracing the Midland Counties from the Thames to the Humber, and from the Welsh border to the confines of Norfolk and Suffolk, Essex and Middlesex⁷.

Penda was a prince of more than ordinary military prowess, and he proved a terrible scourge to his Christian neighbors. Not that he persecuted the Christians, for, on the contrary, he did not obstruct the preaching of Christianity among his people, if any were willing to hear it, and only hated and despised those Christians who did not live up to their faith; saying of them, "They were contemptible and wretched who did not obey the God in whom they believed⁸." But in his career of war and conquest one saintly Christian king after another—S. Edwin, and S. Oswald of Northumbria, Sigebert, Egric and Anna, of East Anglia, and many young princes of the royal blood—all perished by his sword; while S. Oswy and his subjects suffered for above twelve years from his fierce ravages. In vain did Oswy try to purchase peace by rich gifts. Penda would not hear of peace on any terms, being resolved to extirpate the whole Northumbrian nation from the highest to the lowest.

But notwithstanding this bitter spirit of hostility, Penda's family intermarried with that of Oswy. His daughter Cymburga⁹ was married to Oswy's son

⁷ Freeman, *Old English History*, p. 39.

⁸ Bede, l. iii. c. xxi. p. 144.

⁹ *Acta SS. Mart.* vi. SS. Kineburga et Kineswitha. Cymburga is sometimes called Kineburga, and confounded with her sister.

Alchfrid, and his eldest son, Peada, sought in marriage Oswy's daughter Alhfleda¹. But his suit was rejected, unless he and his subjects would become Christians. Peada accordingly placed himself under Christian instruction; and when he heard the preaching of the truth, the promise of the heavenly kingdom, and the hope of resurrection and future immortality, he declared that he would willingly become a Christian, even should he be refused the virgin². He was baptized by Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, with all his earls, soldiers, and servants, A.D. 653, at a village called At-the-Wall³, because it was near the Roman wall. He then returned home with much joy, taking with him five priests, through whose preaching many of the Mercians, both nobles and ceorls, were converted and baptized.

Two years after Peada's baptism Oswy renewed his offers of rich gifts to Penda in exchange for peace; but his overtures being once more rejected, he vowed to God, if He would give him victory, the presents that the Pagan had refused, and also his daughter Elfreda, who was scarcely a year old. He then gave Penda battle at Winwickfield, near Leeds, defeated and killed him, with thirty men of the royal race and many of his people. In fulfilment of his vow, he gave his infant daughter, with land containing one hundred and twenty

¹ Acta SS. Feb. viii. p. 180. S. Elfreda, c. iii. 14, with whom Alhfleda is sometimes confused.

² Bede, l. iii. c. xxi. p. 144.

³ Generally supposed to be Walton. Smith thinks it was Wanbottle near Newcastle. Giles' note, Bede, p. 144.

families, to S. Hilda, then Abbess of Heruteu, or Hartlepool; and S. Hilda built on this land the celebrated abbey of Whitby, in which Elfeda succeeded her as abbess⁴.

After Penda's death Oswy governed the Mercians for two or three years, his son-in-law Peada holding the country south of the Trent as his vassal. Through their exertions Christianity spread greatly in Mercia and the adjacent provinces. They also began to build at Medeshamstede, "to the glory of Christ and the honor of S. Peter," the abbey afterwards so famous as that of Peterborough. But the following Easter Peada was murdered through the treachery, it is said, of his wife, and soon after, A.D. 658, the Mercians rebelled, and set up as their king Wulfhere, a young son of Penda's, whom they had kept concealed so long as Oswy ruled the land. And when they had expelled Oswy's officers, and recovered their liberty and their land, "being thus free with their king, they rejoiced to serve Christ the true King, that they might obtain the everlasting kingdom which is in heaven⁵."

Wulfhere lost no time in finishing the Abbey of S. Peter at Medeshamstede. When the building was completed, he sent through all the nation to invite "all who loved God" to the consecration. It was consecrated A.D. 664, by Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of Ithamar, Bishop of Rochester, Wini, Bishop of London, S. Jaruman, Bishop of the Mercians, Tuda, Bishop of Lindisfarne, and S. Wilfrid, then a priest. There were also present

⁴ Bede, l. iii. c. xxiv. p. 151.

⁵ Ibid. l. iii. c. xxiv. p. 153.

S. Oswy, S. Sebbi and Sighere, Kings of the East Saxons, Wulfhere's brothers and sisters, and a host of priests, earls, dukes, and thanes, all of whom subscribed the charter of the abbey, "with their fingers on the cross of Christ, and assented to it with their tongues." Wulfhere richly endowed the abbey with land, and, at the abbot's request, he gave the monks "an island called Anchoret's Isle, in which they were to build a minster to the glory of S. Mary, for such as wished to lead a life of peace and rest" as hermits. Then feeling that all his gifts fell short of his devotion, he said, "This gift is little; but it is my will that it shall be held so royally and so freely, that neither gold nor tribute be taken from it, except for the monks alone. And so free will I make this minster, that it be subject to Rome alone. And it is my will that all of us who are unable to go to Rome, shall here visit S. Peter. . . . Whosoever shall take from this my gift or the gifts of other good men, may the heavenly gatekeeper take from him in the kingdom of heaven; and whosoever will increase it, may the heavenly gatekeeper increase his state in the kingdom of heaven⁶." All these privileges were confirmed to the abbey by Pope Vitalian, at Wulfhere's request.

The same year that Peada was baptized, Christianity once more found an entrance into the kingdom of the East Saxons. Sigebert, their king, was in the habit of visiting Oswy; and on these occasions Oswy would endeavor, in a brotherly and friendly way, to persuade

⁶ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an. 657.

him that those could not be gods that had been made by the hands of men. Because "God is rather to be understood as of incomprehensible majesty, and invisible to human eyes, almighty, eternal, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of mankind, who governs and will judge the world in righteousness; whose everlasting seat is in heaven, and not in vile, fading matter⁷." After some time Sigebert consulted with those about him as to these new doctrines, and they agreeing with him, they were all baptized at the village At-the-Wall, A.D. 653.

Sigebert took back with him into Essex S. Cedd, brother to the celebrated S. Chad, who was consecrated the first Bishop of the East Saxons by Finan, Bishop of Lindisfarne. He built two large churches at Blackwater, near Maldon, in Essex, and at Tilbury on the Thames, to both of which he attached monasteries. He also built a monastery at Lestingau, or Lavingham, in Yorkshire, where he died. He was buried first in the open air, and afterwards in the stone church of the monastery, which was built "in honor of the Mother of God⁸."

After some years Sigebert was murdered by two brothers, his own kinsmen, who assigned as their motive, that they hated him because he was in the habit of sparing his enemies, and easily forgiving the injuries they had inflicted on him. Sigebert's death, however, did not check the progress of Christianity,

⁷ Bede, l. iii. c. xxii. p. 145.

⁸ Ibid. l. iii. c. xxiii. p. 149.

for his successor Suidhelm, and after him, Sebbi and Sighere, between whom the kingdom was divided, all professed Christianity.

But during a terrible plague which raged in both England and Ireland A.D. 664, Sighere and his subjects, through one of those wild, impious delusions which are so strangely common in times of pestilence, fell back into idolatry, hoping to escape the mortality through demon-worship. As soon, however, as Wulfhere heard what was going on, he sent S. Jaruman, Bishop of Lichfield, to preach to them; and before very long Sighere and his people, repenting of their wickedness, "reopened the churches and rejoiced in confessing the name of Christ, preferring to die in Him with the faith of the resurrection than to live in the filth of apostasy among their idols⁹."

Thus, in less than sixty years, the whole English nation, with the exception of the small kingdom of the South Saxons, had been converted to Christianity.

The South Saxons came to England, A.D. 477, under Ælla and his son Cissa, from whose camp or city the modern Chichester has its name. They must then have been a powerful tribe, for Ælla was the first Bretwalda¹. But from that time they took no part in the

⁹ Bede, l. iii. c. xxx. p. 169.

¹ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an. 477. Bede, l. ii. c. v. p. 76, and l. iv. c. iv. p. 179. Ceaulin, King of the West Saxons, was the second Bretwalda; S. Ethelbert, King of Kent, the third; Redwald, King of the East Angles, the fourth; and he was succeeded by S. Edwin, S. Oswald, and S. Oswy, after whom the title remained in abeyance, till Egbert united England into one kingdom, and became eighth Bretwalda. Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 827.

constant wars of their neighbors, living isolated behind the rampart of woods and cliffs with which nature had provided them, and sunk in the lowest stage of barbarism. Thus Christianity did not reach them till nearly twenty years after it had gained a firm footing in the other English kingdoms.

It happened that some time before the year 681, Ethelwalch their king paid a visit to the court of Wulfhere, King of the Mercians, where he heard the Christian doctrine, and, through Wulfhere's persuasion, was baptized. Wulfhere was his godfather, and gave him as a baptismal gift the Isle of Wight and the eastern part of Hampshire, which he had conquered from Cenwealh, King of the West Saxons. Ethelwalch married Ebba, a West Saxon princess and a Christian. But though both the king and queen of the South Saxons had thus received the true faith, it did not spread among their people. Nor was any impression made on them by the preaching of Dicul, an Irish monk who lived with five or six brethren in a small monastery at Bosanham, or Bosham, four miles from Chichester.

At last, in the year 681, S. Wilfrid, of whom more will be said hereafter, having been driven out of his diocese of York, took refuge with King Ethelwalch. It was a season of frightful suffering. No rain had fallen for three years, and a terrible famine was the consequence. Numbers of the people died, and the survivors fell into despair, so that it was no uncommon sight to behold forty or fifty men kill themselves toge-

ther, by jumping hand-in-hand from some precipitous cliff, or by rushing into the boisterous waves.

When Wilfrid saw their misery he was touched with compassion, and noticing that, though their rivers and coasts abounded with fish, they were so ignorant as not to be able to catch any except eels, he and his people set to work both to catch fish for them, and to teach them how to provide for themselves. These poor Pagans, who had no idea of Christian charity, and had never before experienced such kindness, became very fond of Wilfrid, and listened readily to his preaching. Before long he baptized several of the principal men of the nation; and on the day of their baptism there fell a soft but plentiful rain, which put an end to the drought and famine. This naturally inclined the people to the faith, and Wilfrid and four priests who accompanied him, baptized all the rest of the nation. King Ethelwalch gave him for his maintenance the peninsula of Selsey, eight miles south of Chichester, which contained eighty-seven families, besides two hundred and fifty slaves, to whom, in obedience to the law of the Church, he gave their liberty.

The South Saxons being thus converted, Paganism still lingered only in the Isle of Wight and a narrow strip of land along the coast of Hampshire, both of which were colonized by Jutes. They also became Christian, A.D. 686, under the following circumstances.

Cenwealh, King of the West Saxons, dying, A.D. 672, his widow Sexburga reigned for a year; after which the under-kings, or ealdormen, seized the kingdom and

divided it among themselves², though Escwin, a descendant of Cerdic, and Centwine, the son of Cyne-gils, seem still to have possessed some sort of authority over the rest³. At length Ceadwalla, a daring young man of the race of Ceaulin, subdued the rebellious under-kings, A.D. 685, and united the kingdom in his own person. Then wishing to recover the position which his nation had lost during the late anarchy, he turned his victorious arms against his neighbors, laid waste Kent in two successive years, conquered the South Saxons, killed Ethelwalch, and brought the nation into permanent subjection to the West Saxons. The Isle of Wight still maintaining its independence, he resolved to exterminate its inhabitants and repeople it with his own subjects; and as this was no easy task, he made a vow, though still a Pagan, to give the fourth part of the land and the booty to our Lord. Accordingly, when he had conquered the island he gave Wilfrid a quarter of it, with three hundred families; and Wilfrid committed them to the care of his sister's son, Beorthwine, and a priest called Heddila, who instructed and baptized them⁴. But all the other inhabitants, to the number of nine thousand, were most cruelly butchered. So merciless was Ceadwalla, that two boys, sons of the Jute king, who had escaped to the mainland and hid there, being at last taken and brought to him, he ordered them to be killed. In vain Cyneberht, the abbot of a small monastery at Roodford, or Redbridge, pleaded for

² Bede, l. iv. c. xii. p. 191.

³ Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 674. 676.

⁴ Bede, l. iv. c. xvi. p. 199.

their lives. All that he could obtain was, that their execution should be deferred till he should have instructed and baptized them. The poor boys, reft of all earthly hope, joyfully received the heavenly promises, and their souls being cleansed by baptism, they gladly suffered that temporal death, through which they did not doubt that they would pass to eternal life.

Ceadwalla also gave the town of Pagenham, in Sussex, to Wilfrid, who obtained for the townspeople many valuable privileges. The charter granting these, is a curious proof how completely Christian habits had been established in England; for though Ceadwalla was still a Pagan, he said in it, that in confirmation of the charter he "put a turf upon the holy altar of our Saviour;" adding, "by reason of my ignorance of writing my name, I have expressed and subscribed the sign of the Holy Cross⁵."

Soon after the cruel slaughter of the Jutes, Ceadwalla became a catechumen, probably through Wilfrid's influence and prayers, though history is silent on this point. The grace that was now given him was of no ordinary kind. For in the year 688, while still unbaptized, he "laid down his earthly crown for the sake of our Lord and His everlasting kingdom," and went to Rome to be baptized in the Church of the Apostles, hoping that as soon as he was baptized he might lay down his flesh, and "pass immediately to the eternal joys of heaven." His pious wish was granted. For on Easter Eve, A.D. 689, Pope Sergius baptized him and

⁵ English Saints, S. Wilfrid, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 143.

gave him the name of Peter, his "love for whom had brought him from the utmost bounds of the earth⁶;" and a few days after he fell ill and died, while he still wore the white robe of his baptism.

Thus in ninety years from S. Augustine's arrival the conversion of England was completed.

⁶ Bede, l. v. c. vii. p. 244.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

THE conversion of England is one of the most remarkable events in history. For the new faith, in the brief period of sixty years, took so strong a hold on the nation, that it completely revolutionized its life and habits; and this mighty work was effected without persecution or compulsion, or the shedding of a single drop of blood, and entirely through the full exercise of liberty.

When S. Augustine arrived, England was the abode of pirates, who surpassed other barbarians in ferocity, and were devoted to the worship of Woden and Thor, Ostara and Freyr, and their long train of bloodthirsty and obscene deities. But no sooner was kingdom after kingdom regenerated in baptism, and fed with the "Bread of the elect and the wine that germinates virgins¹," than the full perception of supernatural virtue burst upon each in succession, and humility and purity, charity, mortification, and missionary zeal,

¹ Zach. ix. 17.

sprang forth abundantly. What makes this great revolution the more striking is, that side by side with the bright lights of sanctity, one meets with frequent wars between neighboring kingdoms, difficulties about the Christian restrictions on marriage, and collisions between royal and ecclesiastic authority, such as might naturally be looked for in a disorderly society. The simple and graphic narration of these opposite facts by contemporary historians, not only attests the veracity of the writers, but also proves that the saintly virtues which command admiration, were no Utopian dream of ideal perfection, but the fruits of the hard fight of grace against nature, and the triumph of Christian hope and love over national habits and vices.

So completely did the nation abandon its piratical practices, that when Alfred resolved, in the ninth century, to defend England by wooden walls, he was actually obliged to create a navy. We are told² that the ships which he built "were shapen neither like the Frisian nor the Danish" vessels, "but so as it seemed to him they would be most efficient," as if the old national model of a ship of war no longer existed. And he brought over many Frisians to teach the English how to manage them. In fact, so fully was the new Christian life developed, that for about one hundred and fifty years the title of Isle of Saints might well be applied to this former Isle of Pirates.

The peculiarities of the nation's social organization naturally affected its conversion.

² Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, an. 897.

The German tribes who conquered Britain, were among those with whom the family, and not the village, was the nucleus of society³; as appears from their custom of estimating the value of land by the number of families that it maintained. They were all divided into three classes—the eorls or nobles, the ceorls, who were the great mass of the nation who bore arms, and these two classes alone constituted the body politic; for the third class, theowes or serfs, had no political privileges, and were more or less dependent on the upper classes. When an important matter had to be settled, it was first discussed in the witena-gemot, or council of wise men, composed of nobles, priests, and heads of families. Afterwards it was submitted to the national assembly, in which the ceorls accepted or rejected by acclamation the decision of the witena-gemot; and their vote was required to be unanimous, or nearly so, for these free Germans had no idea that an assembly could be supposed to assent to what had been carried by only a small numerical majority⁴.

This process seems to have been adopted with the new religion, which, as soon as it was accepted by the wise men and heads of families, became the religion of the kingdom. But this national decision did not interfere with individual liberty. For it has been seen that several members of Penda's family, besides

³ Freytag, *Bilder*. c. i. p. 76.

Burke, *Abridgment of English History*, l. ii. c. 7. Works, vol. ix. pp. 347. 360. ed. Rivington, 1826.

Mercian nobles and ceorls, and also Ethelwalch and his queen, were Christians, while their respective kingdoms continued to be Pagan; and, on the other hand, the profession of Paganism by Cenwealh and Ceadwalla did not affect the position of Christianity, except so far as their personal influence might have extended.

The characteristics, then, of the conversion of England are very remarkable: rapidity united with thoroughness, wholesale baptisms with freedom for the individual. We do not mean that the great revolution effected succeeded at once in effacing all the old Adam out of the Saxon barbarian. We often meet still with great crimes, yet we never in the old English history come upon such hybrid monsters as Brunehaut and Frédégonde. In order to see how utterly different a Saxon king was from a Merovingian monarch, we have only to contrast the Venerable Bede with Gregory of Tours. The circumstances of the Saxon conquest of England will explain the difference. The Merovingian was a barbarian with a varnish of Roman culture. The Englishman was a fresh child of nature with the virtues of a Christian. The Frankish kings on the Continent found themselves in the midst of the ancient Roman Christianity, and settled themselves amongst and intermingled with the Romanized Gaul. It was not so with the German pirates who conquered Britain. Of course it is impossible to exterminate a nation, and British women no doubt often became the wives or slaves of the Saxons, and the serfs of the South and

West were very probably enslaved Britons; yet the policy of the Saxon was one of extermination, while that of the Frank was, on the whole, of preservation. While the Franks dwelt amidst the churches and amphitheatres of the ancient Roman civilization, the Saxons drove the old population into the mountains and the fens, absolutely destroyed Silchester, Pevensey, and Wroxeter, and repopled waste cities. The peculiarity of the conversion of the English by S. Augustine and his successors was the consequence of this state of things. The Saxon king was not a blood-stained burlesque of a Roman emperor, like the Merovingian Frank. He was still a genuine German chief, and pure German ideas were to be found in England when they were adulterated on the Continent. Hence when the king was converted, Christianity was proposed to the Witau, and the nation gave to the religion of its king and nobles a hearing, which could not have been extorted by his command. Grace found a virgin soil in the frankness and independence of the Saxon, unspoiled by a decaying civilization. Christianity, instead of filtering through the remains of Gallo-Roman churches into the Alamanic tribes, as it chiefly did on the Continent till the English undertook the work of conversion, flowed like the orderly rise of a beneficent river over the genial land of Saxon England. Our ancestors received the faith through the pure lips of a few holy monks, instead of through the gradual pressure of a conquered and often degraded people. All this has left traces even to the

present time. English bishoprics are not, like those of France, seated in the old Roman towns, but in the capitals of Saxon kingdoms, and thus bear witness to the thorough annihilation of the ancient British Church. Above all, the remarkable union in the old English Church of nationality and of loyalty to Rome, is explained by its direct origin from the holy city, as well as by the circumstances of its kings. The Saxon king who could not point, like the Frank, to an investiture from Cæsar, was glad, like the boy Alfred, to be consecrated by the Roman Pontiff, instead of being a bad imitation of the Roman emperor; and the Saxon bishop was ever docile to the See of Peter, from which he derived the pure stream of the faith. In consequence of this the English Church offers a fine example of thorough organization imposed once for all, and carried out perfectly from the very first. All the orders of clergy, with bishops and metropolitans, the monastic discipline, the solemnities of Divine worship, even trained singers, with books as the foundation of a library—all were provided; and the whole was knitted together and consolidated by the closest union with the Chair of S. Peter.

As to the faith, the English Church was happy in its insular position, which protected it from contamination by heresy. The only Christians, besides the Roman Church, with whom it came in contact, were the Britons and Irish, the purity of whose faith has never been impugned.

At the council of Rome, held by Pope Agatho, A.D. 680, S. Wilfrid, then Bishop of York, "in the name of all the churches in the north of Britain, . . . made open profession of the true Catholic faith⁵." And about the same time, S. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, assembled the English bishops at Hatfield, where they unanimously declared their adhesion to the true Catholic faith as expressed in the creeds, in the writings of the holy Fathers, and in the canons of the five general councils and the synod held in Rome by Pope Martin I. for the condemnation of monothelitism⁶. For many centuries this pure Catholic faith was that of the English Church, and no heresy found entrance within her.

As to the national devotions, that to "our Lady S. Mary" was expressed from the earliest times by the erection of churches to her honor, and by the solemn dedication of all the property of the English Church "as an everlasting inheritance to the glory of Christ, and of our Lady S. Mary, and of the holy Apostles," by Withred, King of Kent, in his own name and that of his successors, at a Great Council of his kingdom held A.D. 694⁷. For this reason England was wont to be called "Mary's dowry." The festivals of her Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption were celebrated. Her intercession was constantly sought. And her glories, especially her perpetual virginity, and

⁵ Bede, l. v. c. xix. p. 272.

⁶ Ibid. l. iv. c. xviii. p. 203.

⁷ Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 694.

her dignity as Mother of God, were celebrated by both poets and prose writers⁸.

The general devotion to S. Peter is seen in the fact, that most of the churches first founded, were dedicated to him. It also appears in the constant pilgrimages to Rome by kings, bishops, and persons of all classes—the laity flocking thither to receive absolution at the apostle's tomb, and the clergy to be more perfectly instructed in Catholic doctrines and customs. The necessity for communion with the Holy See cannot be more clearly expressed than by the Venerable Bede, who says “that the powers of the keys had been given to S. Peter, to the end that all throughout the world might know, that whosoever should separate himself from the unity of Peter's faith and Peter's fellowship, could never obtain absolution from the bonds of sin, nor admission through the gates of the heavenly kingdom⁹.”

It has been already told in what a large and gentle spirit S. Gregory's directions to S. Augustine were conceived, and how tender he was to the natural feelings and habits of the converts, taking care only to purify them from error and associate them with Christian truth. But in all more important points, such as the administration of the sacraments, the due succession of holy orders, and church government and discipline, the Roman customs were carried out with the greatest

⁸ Bede, Homil. 24, in Purificat. Works, v. p. 173, ed. Giles. S. Aldhelm, in Bibl. Patr. viii. 14, Ap. Lingard, Anglo-Saxon Church, ii. c. x. p. 86.

⁹ Bede, Homil. 27. Works, v. p. 199.

strictness. This is evident from the care which Bede takes to record by whom the various bishops were consecrated, and the several lines of succession. Also, when the See of Canterbury was vacant from A.D. 664 to 668, S. Wilfrid went to France to be consecrated; while S. Chad, who was not equally careful, but accepted consecration from Wini, Bishop of the West Saxons, in the presence of two British bishops, was obliged, on the arrival of Archbishop Theodore, to resign his see and be consecrated afresh, his former consecration being declared invalid¹. Similar care was taken to make sure of the validity of baptisms, as appears from the lives of S. Boniface and S. John of Beverley. On one occasion, S. John having questioned one of his attendants as to the circumstances of his baptism, baptized him anew, saying, "If you were baptized by that priest, your baptism is not perfect; for I know him, and that he could not, by reason of the dulness of his understanding, learn the ministry of catechizing and baptizing: for which reason I commanded him altogether to desist from his presumptuous exercising of the ministry, which he could not duly perform²."

In the civil government of the nation, too, the influence of Christianity was evident. S. Ethelbert was so anxious to bring the laws and customs of his people into harmony with Christian morality and the laws of the Church, that, "by the advice of wise persons, he introduced judicial decrees after the Roman fashion,

¹ Bede, l. iii. c. xxviii. and l. iv. c. ii.

² Ibid. l. v. c. vi.

which, being written in English," continued to be "observed by the nation³." His example was followed by Withred, one of his successors, Ina, King of the West Saxons, and Offa, King of the Mercians; and these codes, being handed down by Alfred and S. Edward the Confessor, became the basis of Christian law and liberty in England.

Further proofs of the Christian spirit of the newly-converted monarchs, are found in their generosity to the Church, and even more in the fact, that as each kingdom received the faith, bishoprics were established, monasteries were founded, synods were held, and ecclesiastical canons and papal decrees were accepted without the opposition which might naturally have been expected from a barbarian nation, unbroken to obedience, and jealous of its independence. At the same time, notwithstanding the frequent wars between rival states, the subdivisions of the country were not allowed to interfere with the perfect carrying out of ecclesiastical government and discipline.

Moreover, the Church did not encounter the same difficulties about marriage in England as in France. This may, perhaps, be partly attributable to the morality of the nation, even as Pagans, being of a higher tone than that of the Franks; polygamy not being the privilege of kings and nobles, and the family relations being strengthened by the social organization. It cannot, however, be supposed that a people accustomed to the

³ Bede, l. ii. c. v. p. 77.

worship of Ostara and Freyr, fell at once into habits of Christian purity. But it was not till the next century, when its religious fervor was subsiding, that gross cases of licentiousness⁴ were placed on record.

⁴ Ep. S. Bonifac. 72 Wurdt. 19 Serar.

CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH KINGS.

THE Teutonic nations far surpassed the Greeks and Romans in the firmness of their belief in the supernatural world and a future life. When S. Augustine came to England the English seem to have been much occupied with these subjects, and the hope which Christianity held out to soothe their fears and anxiety was the chief incentive to their conversion. S. Ethelbert's answers to S. Augustine, the long, deep thoughtfulness of S. Edwin, the speeches of his council, the arguments addressed by S. Oswy to Sigebert, are all very remarkable in the chiefs of a nation of ferocious pirates. They show habits of self-control and intellectual powers, which raise the speakers far above the ordinary level of barbarians; while the similarity which is apparent between their just, conservative, and reflective tone, and the best points of the modern English character, attests the veracity of Bede's record.

In the history of that period many little incidents give interesting glimpses into the character of these

barbarian converts, and show how simply they practised the virtues of that supernatural life, on which they had so joyfully entered.

Many instances of S. Ethelbert's and S. Edwin's generosity and zeal have already been mentioned. S. Oswald was not in any respect their inferior; and he did for his paternal kingdom of Bernicia what S. Edwin had done for Deira. Churches and monasteries were built; Christian teachers were brought from Scotland; and as S. Aidan spoke English imperfectly, S. Oswald was accustomed to accompany him as he went about preaching, and to interpret the word of God to his subjects¹. It has been told how he erected a cross and knelt in prayer before his great battle with Ceadwalla. Prayer was the great business of his life. Not only did he join the clergy in chanting the night office, but he prolonged his devotions for many hours of the night between lauds and the break of day. He was so constantly occupied in praying and giving thanks to God, that it was his habit always to sit with his hands on his knees, turned up in the attitude of prayer; and it became a proverb, "that he ended his life in prayer." For in his last battle with Penda, amid the excitement and confusion of defeat, when old Pagan thoughts of blood and revenge might naturally have rushed to his mind, even as he fell he prayed for his enemies, saying, "Lord, have mercy on their souls²."

His charity equalled his piety. One Easter Day he sat

¹ Bede, l. iii. c. iii. p. 112.

² Ibid. l. iii. c. xii. p. 128.

down to table with S. Aidan, and a silver dish, full of choice dainties in honor of the festival, was set before him. But just as grace was about to be said, the servant whose business it was to relieve the poor, came in and told the king that a crowd of destitute persons was asking alms at the gate. Oswald instantly ordered the dainties of which he was going to partake, to be given to them, and the silver dish to be cut in pieces, and distributed among them; whereupon Aidan, charmed with this act, seized Oswald's right hand, exclaiming, "May this hand never perish!" These words proved prophetic. For when Oswald fell in battle, his right hand and arm were cut off, and long preserved incorrupt in a silver case at S. Peter's Church at Bamborough³.

The most interesting and saintly character of this age was S. Oswin⁴. He was the son of S. Edwin's cousin Osric, who succeeded him in Deira, and apostatized from the faith. When Osric was killed by Ceadwalla, Oswin being only a child, his friends managed to carry him off to Wessex. Here he remained in exile for ten years; and as he grew up he was remarkable for his personal beauty, his attractive manners, and his great virtue, especially his humility, so that he was beloved by all, whether noble or simple, who approached him. After Oswald's death, A.D. 642, he was raised to the

³ Bede, c. vi. p. 118.

⁴ Ibid. l. iii. c. xiii. p. 131. *English Saints, S. Oswin*, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, which is taken in great part from "Vit. S. Oswin." by a monk of Tynemouth, published by the Surtees Society from the MS. Cotton.

throne of Deira, but whether by Oswy, Oswald's brother and successor in Bernicia, or by the choice of the Deiri, is not known.

For seven years Oswin reigned peacefully and prosperously. S. Aidan often came to visit him, and a warm friendship sprang up between the saintly bishop and the saintly king. The king "looked on the bishop as an angel, treasured up his words, and obeyed him as if he were inspired; correcting at his reproof whatsoever he had done amiss." The bishop, on the other hand, loved the king as though he was part of his own soul, "and delighted in his humility and obedience, one while upbraiding him as a son, if he were too much occupied with secular matters, and another while cherishing and inflaming him, like a dear friend, with familiar spiritual conversation . . . about the contempt of the world, the sweetness of the heavenly life, and the glory of the saints⁵." The bishop's lessons produced their due effect. Oswin watched, fasted, and prayed; he took care of all his subjects with fatherly affection, relieving the poor, especially strangers, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, bestowing favors graciously on all who asked them, and repressing with firmness all infractions of the laws.

But though he was beloved by all, and every thing prospered with him, yet, "freely drawn by the sole contemplation of his Creator, he lived in the royal purple as David did, poor and sorrowing; poor in spirit even while he abounded in wealth and royal

⁵ S. Oswin, p. 82.

state; sorrowful in spirit, because he trusted not his heart to his abundance of good things. . . . In the midst of a noisy court, which was ever too much for him, he fled far off and remained in the solitude of his mind, even when his subjects thronged about him. Abroad he carried himself as a king, in a kingly way, but inwardly he was a king over his own affections, courageously exercising himself in humility and poverty, . . . and pouring out his whole soul in works of mercy⁶."

It was the habit of S. Aidan, as of all the monks and bishops of that day, to travel on foot through his diocese. In order to spare his spiritual father this fatigue, and the danger which attended his crossing rapid rivers on foot, the young king gave him an extraordinarily fine horse, capable of carrying him safely through every peril. But soon after, as S. Aidan rode along, he met a poor man who asked an alms of him; whereupon, dismounting, he gave the fine horse with its royal trappings to the beggar. When the young king heard what had become of the horse, he was vexed, and said to S. Aidan, "Why did you give the poor man that royal horse? Had I not many other horses which would have been good enough for that poor man, instead of giving him that horse, which I had chosen specially for yourself?" But S. Aidan answered, "O king! is that foal of a mare more dear to you than the son of God?" They went in to dinner, and the bishop sat down; but the king stood at the fire warming

⁶ S. Oswin, p. 94.

himself. Then all on a sudden, ungirding his sword and giving it to a servant, Oswin threw himself at S. Aidan's feet, beseeching him to forgive him, and saying, "From this time forward, I will never speak any more of this, nor will I judge of what, or how much of our money you give to the sons of God." S. Aidan, touched with the king's humility, raised him, and bade him sit down to table and banish his sorrow. Oswin obeyed, and soon began to laugh and joke; but S. Aidan became more and more sad, even to tears. Then one of his priests asked him in Irish why he wept; and he answered, "I know that the king will not live long; for I never before saw so humble a king. Whence I conclude that he will soon be snatched out of this life, because this nation is not worthy of such a ruler⁷."

Too soon, alas! was S. Aidan's presentiment verified. Oswy long looked enviously on the virtues and popularity of his saintly colleague; but for some time he suppressed his feelings, chiefly through S. Aidan's influence. At length, at the end of seven years, his pent-up anger began to manifest itself in a succession of petty disputes, in which Oswin's gentleness and humility always placed him at an advantage. Thus passed two years of trial and trouble, till at last Oswy lost all self-control, and breaking out into fury, collected a large army, and marched against his hated foe.

Oswin, too, collected such troops as he could, and met

⁷ Bede, l. iii. c. xiv. p. 132.

Oswy at Wilfar's Hill, about ten miles from Catterick. But when he saw how inferior was his own force to that of Oswy, he could not endure the thought of the slaughter that must ensue, and knowing that it was his crown, or at the most his life, that Oswy aimed at, he resolved to disband his army, and calmly await alone whatever God might order for him. In vain his soldiers, "wounded with a deep wound in their hearts," knelt to him, and imploring, besought him to let them fight for him. "Haply," said they, "we may conquer; we may break even through those wedges of men. But if not, let us die, and not pass into a proverb as deserters of our king." But Oswin was unmoved, and explaining to them his motives, he added, "I pant after martyrdom and the joys of the heavenly kingdom." Then, kneeling down, he prayed aloud, "Father of mercy, and God of all consolation, whose Son is the Angel of great counsel, whose Spirit is the Comforter in difficulties, grant me in this strait to choose the better way. For if I fight, I shall be guilty before Thee of the shedding of blood. If I fly, I shall be accounted to have degenerated from the nobility of my parents, and to have fallen short of my station. Flying I displease men; fighting I displease Thee." So saying, he made his choice, and "fixed his anchor in God."

Having dismissed his soldiers, Oswin retired with one faithful follower, Tondhere, to the village of Gilling, not far from Richmond, which he had lately given to Count Hunwald. But when Oswy found that Deira was his without striking a blow, no generous or noble emotion

stirred his breast; and he only felt that he had been balked of his triumph, for the meek and humble Oswin was still his superior. He therefore ordered Ethelwin, one of his chiefs, to go with a band of soldiers in search of the fugitive king, and kill him. Quickly they found him, for Hunwald basely betrayed his benefactor. On learning Ethelwin's errand, Oswin was disturbed by the suddenness of his doom and the perfidy of his friend. But soon recovering himself, and making the sign of the cross on his heart and tongue, he said to Ethelwin, "The sentence of your king depends upon the permission of my King." He pleaded with Ethelwin for the life of his follower; but Tondhere, with true Teutonic fidelity, would not survive his lord. Both were slain and buried together at Gilling; on the 20th of August, A.D. 651.

It is hard to turn from S. Oswin to his cruel enemy with any other feeling than horror and disgust. Yet truth requires it to be told, that the murder of Oswin was a solitary blot on Oswy's fame. His contrition for this sin was deep and sincere; and at the instance of his queen, S. Eanfled, the daughter of S. Edwin and S. Ethelberga, he humbled himself before his subjects, and built a monastery at Gilling as a public confession and lasting memorial of his sin and his penitence. His earnest, but vain endeavors to live at peace with Penda, his pious vow and trust in God to give him victory in a just war, and his zeal in spreading the faith among the Mercians and East Saxons, have already been mentioned. The same piety appears in all his actions; and in none more conspicuously than in the

conference, held A.D. 664, at Whitby, for the decision of the Easter controversy, when, on hearing that our Lord had given the keys of heaven and of hell to S. Peter, he instantly abjured the prejudices of his Irish education and the habits of his life, in obedience to the Word of God.

At the time of his death he was preparing to go with S. Wilfrid to Rome, to end his days in prayer and penance. His Christian course, sullied by only one great crime, won for him from his subjects and contemporaries the reputation of a saint, and his name appears in the English Martyrology on the 15th of February.

In such characters as Oswy, Wulfhere, and Cenwealh, can be traced the lingering imperfections of their barbarian nature and habits, together with the triumph of Christian grace. All three were warlike princes, drawn by their own ambition, or driven by the restlessness of their barbarian subjects, into frequent aggressions on their neighbors. Oswy pressed down upon Wulfhere, who made amends for his losses in the north by subjugating the East Saxons, and wresting the Isle of Wight and great part of Hampshire from Cenwealh, who, in his turn, compensated himself at the expense of the Britons in Somersetshire and Devonshire. But though all three had once been Pagans, and must often have joined in the worship of Woden and Thor and the bloodthirsty fury which it inspired, yet all three laid aside their cruel Pagan customs, and fought much as Christian nations now fight for territory and dominion; while the use which they made of their

victories might well shame modern civilization. Oswy's three years' occupation of Mercia spread the blessings of Christianity throughout that kingdom. Wulfhere watched with paternal carefulness over the faith of the East Saxons, hastening to revive the hope and courage which had failed them amid the horrors of pestilence. While Cenwealh, far from exterminating the vanquished Britons, as his forefathers had done, nobly granted them the protection of the laws in return for the contempt and hatred with which they continued to treat his nation.

It is also remarkable that though they had been trained in youth to consider pride and revenge as duties, yet, after their conversion, these natural feelings did not interrupt their Christian harmony. The history of the Abbey of Peterborough is a case in point. This abbey was begun by Oswy and Peada during Oswy's occupation of Mercia, but it was finished by Wulfhere after he had expelled Oswy. Thus it was a monument of Wulfhere's triumph and Oswy's defeat. Notwithstanding, on the joyful day of consecration Oswy was present and signed the charter after Wulfhere; while Wulfhere, we are told, "favored the abbey much for the love of his brother Peada, and for the love of Oswy, his brother' by baptism," so that "it waxed very rich."

Again S. Wilfrid was the friend and bishop of Oswy, and also the friend and adviser of his rival Wulfhere. And though Oswy had set aside S. Wilfrid's nomination to the bishopric of York, and given it to S. Chad,

yet, when Archbishop Theodore degraded S. Chad and placed S. Wilfrid in the see, neither Oswy nor the two bishops seem to have had any sore feeling on the subject.

There was one point in which the English surpassed all other converts to the faith, except the Irish; and this was in their remarkable attraction to monastic life. The whole of England was Christianized through monks; all the first bishops were monks, unless S. Birinus was an exception, of which there is no proof: monasteries were attached to all the principal churches and bishoprics⁸; and the English of all classes and both sexes flocked to them by hundreds and thousands.

The English kings and queens set their subjects an example in this respect, which has no parallel in history, no less than twenty-six of them having laid aside their crowns, and exchanged the dignity and pleasures of royalty for the obedience and poverty of the cloister. The example was set by S. Sigebert, King of the East Angles, who "became so great a lover of the heavenly kingdom, that quitting the affairs of his crown, . . . he went into a monastery, . . and having received the tonsure, applied himself rather to gain a heavenly throne. Some time after Penda made war on the East Angles, who, finding themselves inferior to their enemy, entreated Sigebert to lead them

⁸ Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. Preface, c. xxvii. As late as A.D. 1151, out of seventeen English bishoprics, eight were attached to monasteries, one had regular canons, and only eight had secular canons, c. xxx.

to battle. He refused: whereupon they drew him against his will out of the monastery and carried him to the army, hoping that the soldiers would gain confidence from the presence of one who had been distinguished as a brave leader. But he, remembering his religious profession, even in the midst of the battle would carry nothing but a wand in his hand, and was killed with his kinsman and successor Ecgric⁹."

There was also S. Sebbi, the son of Siward, one of the three sons of Sabert¹, who had restored Paganism among the East Saxons. Sebbi governed the East Saxons conjointly with his nephew Sighere, under Wulfhere, King of the Mercians. He led a life of prayer, penance, and almsdeeds amid the cares and temptations of a throne, so that it was often said that he ought to have been a bishop rather than a king. He long wished to exchange the wealth and honors of his kingdom for the peace and retirement of monastic life, but his wife positively refused to be divorced from him. At length, when he had reigned thirty years, being attacked with a mortal malady, he persuaded her to consent "that then at least they should jointly devote themselves to the service of God." He accordingly received the tonsure from Waldhere, Bishop of London, A.D. 693, and became a monk in the monastery of S. Peter and S. Paul, whither he carried a large sum of money for the poor, "reserving nothing for himself, but rather coveting to remain poor in spirit for the sake

⁹ Bede, l. iii. c. xviii. p. 138.

¹ Acta SS. Aug. 29, S. Sebbi. Bede, l. iv. c. xi. p. 189.

of the kingdom of heaven." He was buried in the old church of S. Paul's, and miracles were worked at his tomb, which, distinguished by its colossal length, was to be seen till the great fire of London, A.D. 1666².

Again there was S. Ethelred, brother and successor of Wulfhere, King of Mercia. In the second year of his reign, A.D. 676, he made a raid into Kent as in the old Pagan times, ravaging, burning, utterly destroying the city of Rochester, "profaning churches and monasteries, without regard to religion or the fear of God³." Whether he was a Christian at this time does not appear; but probably he was not. For only three years after his mode of warfare was quite changed; and after gaining a victory over Egfrid, King of Northumbria, near the Trent, he was induced by Archbishop Theodore to stop the carnage, to put an end to what promised to be a very bloody war and a lasting enmity, and to conclude a peace, which continued long after between the two kingdoms⁴. From this time he was distinguished by his piety, and after reigning twenty-nine years, he laid aside his crown, A.D. 704, and became a monk in the Abbey of Bardney in Lincolnshire, which he and his wife Ostritha, daughter of Oswy, had founded⁵ to receive the bones of her uncle, S. Oswald.

S. Ethelred was succeeded by Cenred, who, after governing the Mercians nobly for five years, "did a much more noble act by quitting his throne, A.D. 709, and going to Rome; where being shorn and made a

² Moines d'Occident, v. l. xvi.

³ Bede, l. iv. c. xii. p. 192. Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 676.

⁴ Bede, c. xxi. p. 209.

⁵ Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 704.

monk at the relics of the Apostles, he continued to his last hour in prayers, fastings, and almsdeeds." With him went Offa, son of Sighere, King of the East Saxons, "a youth of most lovely age and beauty, and most earnestly desired by all his nation for their king. He, with like devotion, quitted his wife, lands, kindred, and country, for Christ and for the Gospel, that he might receive an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. He also, when they came to the holy places at Rome, receiving the tonsure and adopting a monastic life, attained the long-wished-for sight of the blessed Apostles in heaven⁶."

Then there was Ceadwalla, who, as has already been told, "quitted his crown for the sake of our Lord and His everlasting kingdom⁷." And also Entwin, one of the under-kings of Wessex, whom Ceadwalla had conquered, and who found more peace in the monk's cowl than in the royal crown which he had worn for a while⁸.

There was also S. Richard, another of the under-kings of Wessex. He gave up his kingdom A.D. 721, and set out for Rome with his two sons, S. Willibald and S. Winibald, but dying on the way he was buried at Lucca⁹. There was also Ceolwulf, King of Northumbria, who received S. Peter's tonsure, A.D. 737, and gave his crown to his nephew Eadbert¹. And Eadbert,

⁶ Bede, l. v. c. xix. p. 268. Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 709.

⁷ Bede, c. vii. p. 244.

⁸ Wilhelm. Malmesbur. De Reg. Ang. l. i. c. ii. in Vit. S. Inæ. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 462.

⁹ Acta SS. Feb. 7, S. Richard. Comment. Træv. v. c. xxvi.

¹ Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 757.

too, after reigning twenty years, "was shorn" A.D. 757².

But the most celebrated of these royal monks was S. Ina, King of the West Saxons, who is remarkable as a great legislator, a brave and successful warrior, and the founder of the abbeys of Glastonbury, Abingdon, and Taunton. He is also said to have been the first English king, who levied Peter's pence on every house in his kingdom. After a glorious reign of forty years, he quitted his throne and went to Rome A.D. 728³. In Rome he founded a school for the English, and also a hospital for the reception of English pilgrims, which latter, though used for a different purpose, still exists under the name of S. Spirito in Sassia⁴.

His adoption of the monastic life was brought about by his queen Ethelburga. She had often pointed out to him the transitory nature of all earthly wealth and greatness, and often exhorted him to give them up voluntarily, before they should be torn from him by death. But though he consented to the wisdom of her words, he constantly kept deferring the great act of self-renunciation. At length it came to pass that he gave a great feast to his nobles, when the walls were hung with rich tapestry, the tables were covered with gold and silver vessels, and choice viands and wines, and all ate and drank, and were merry. The next day Ina and his queen set out for another of his houses; and as

² Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 757.

³ Bede, l. v. c. vii. p. 245. Anglo-Saxon Chron. an. 728.

⁴ Ozonam, *Civilisation Chrétienne*, c. v. p. 169.

they were about to start, Ethelburga called the steward and said to him, "As soon as the king is gone fill the house with rubbish and filth, and lay a sow with her litter of pigs in the bed where the king slept." The steward did as the queen commanded. And when Ina and the queen had gone about a mile from the house, she said to him, "Turn back, my lord, to the house whence we have come, for it will be greatly for thy good to do so." So he did as she wished and turned back. And when he reached the house, greatly amazed was he to find all the curtains and precious vessels gone, and the house full of filth and rubbish, and a sow and her litter in his own bed. Then Ethelburga said to him, "Seest thou, O king, how the pomp of this world passeth away? Where are now all the goodly things, the curtains, the vessels, the meats and drinks, wherewith thou and thy lords feasted yesterday? How filthy is now the house which but yesterday was goodly and fit for a king! What a foul beast lieth in the bed in which a king slept only last night! Are not all the things of this life a breath, yea, smoke, and a wind that passeth away? Are they not a river that runneth by, and no man seeth the water any more? Woe then to them that cleave to the things of this life only. And shall not we who have more power and wealth than others, have worse punishments than others if we cleave to these things alone? Thou growest old and the time is short. Wilt thou not lay aside thy kingdom and all the things of this life, and go as a pilgrim to the threshold of the Apostles in the

great city of Rome, and there serve God all the rest of the days that He shall give thee?" So King Ina listened to his wife; and he gave up his kingdom to his kinsman Ethelard, and went to Rome⁵. His wife joyfully bade him farewell, hoping to meet him again soon in the heavenly kingdom; and she, too, gave up her queenly dignity and went into the convent at Wimburn, which Ina's sister had built, and there she lived as a nun in poverty and obedience till her death.

⁵ Wilhelm. Malmesbur. de Reg. Ang. l. i. c. ii. ap. Acta SS. O. S. B. sec. iii. t. i. p. 465. Freeman, Old English History, p. 71. Some have doubted whether S. Ina became a monk, but it is asserted by Bromton in his Chronicle, by William of Malmesbury, and by Henschenius. See Acta SS. O. S. B. as above. It is also proved by the letter at the end of S. Boniface's correspondence, addressed to a king, generally supposed to be Ina, the superscription of which begins with "Reverendissimo Fratri." Ep. 162, Wurd. 48, Serar.

CHAPTER VI.

ENGLISH QUEENS AND PRINCESSES.

THE German tribes who colonized Britain, conceded to their women even a higher position than the honorable one granted them by the other branches of their race. For as the family was the nucleus of the national organization, the influence of the wife and the mother was proportionately increased. It has been remarked as a distinctive honor of the English saints, that so many of them were connected by ties of blood¹, so that sanctity seemed to run in families; a peculiarity which is evidently to be attributed to the influence of female relatives. The English queens and princesses after their conversion to Christianity, made a noble use of their influence, and in no way fell behind their husbands and fathers in the practice of heroic virtue.

It has been already seen how S. Bertha and her daughter, S. Ethelberga, by their fidelity to Christian worship opened the way respectively to the conversion of Kent and Northumbria. S. Ethelberga also set the example to English queens and widows of quitting

¹ Acta SS. Feb. 7, S. Richard. Comment. Præv. i. 1.

the world and entering the cloister, and encouraged Englishwomen of all ranks to devote themselves to the monastic life.

After her return to Kent, her brother, Eadbald, built her a convent at Liming, an old Roman villa between Canterbury and the sea, where she spent the last fourteen years of her life². Her sister, S. Eadburga, became a nun under her rule; and also her niece, S. Eanswitha, the daughter of Eadbald, for whom he afterwards built a convent at Folkstone, which he dedicated to S. Peter and S. Paul³. The Abbeyes of Liming and Folkstone were the first founded in England for women⁴.

S. Ethelberga's only daughter, S. Eanfled, having been taken as a child to Kent, grew up under her mother's eye till she became the wife of S. Oswy. In the history of his reign, she frequently appears exercising a good influence on those around her; now exhorting her husband to contrition and penance for the murder of Oswin; then inducing her stepson, Alchfrid, and others at her court, to follow the Roman custom as to the observance of Easter; again, discerning the merits of the young S. Wilfrid, and sending him to Rome to be more perfectly instructed in Catholic customs; and also uniting with Oswy in the pious dedication of her infant daughter, S. Elfleda, to God's service. When she was left a widow, A.D. 670, she

² Zell, Lioba, und die frommen Angelsächsischen Frauen, l. i. c. iii. p. 48.

³ Acta SS., S. Eanswid. Aug. 31, p. 684.

⁴ Moines d'Occident, t. v. l. 17.

became a nun in the Abbey of Whitby, which, after S. Hilda's death, A.D. 680, she governed conjointly with her daughter, S. Elffeda⁵. Thus three successive generations of S. Bertha's female descendants, became nuns and saints. Two more generations will hereafter come under our notice.

S. Elffeda, though a descendant of S. Bertha, belongs more properly to the royal race of Northumbria, which was no less illustrious than that of Kent through the sanctity of its princesses. At the head of them all stands S. Hilda, one of the most remarkable personages of her time. She was the daughter of Hereric, S. Edwin's nephew, and was born A.D. 614. She was one of S. Paulinus's first converts, having been baptized by him at the same time as her great uncle, S. Edwin, when she was thirteen years of age.

The first thirty-three years of her life "she spent most nobly in the secular habit," and then she resolved "to dedicate more nobly the remaining half to our Lord in a monastic life," and "to serve Him alone⁶." She accordingly went into East Anglia with the intention of proceeding to the monastery of Chelles, ten miles from Paris, where her sister, Heresuid, wife of Anna, King of East Anglia, was a nun. But after she had waited a year in East Anglia, S. Aidan induced her to return home, and gave her a small piece of land at the mouth of the river Wear, where with a few companions, she

⁵ Bede, l. iii. c. xv. p. 133; c. xxiv. p. 152; c. xxv. p. 154; l. iv. c. xxvi. p. 224; l. v. c. xix. p. 269.

⁶ Ibid. l. iv. c. xxiii. p. 212.

led a monastic life for a year. She was then made Abbess of Heruteu, or Hartlepool, a convent which had been founded by S. Heiu⁷, who is said to have been the first woman in Northumbria to become a nun, and who at this time removed to Tadcaster. S. Hilda, on becoming abbess of Heruteu, immediately set to work to establish regular discipline, in which she was instructed and aided by S. Aidan and other holy and learned men, who loved her "because of her innate wisdom and inclination to the service of God."

After some years, S. Oswy having given her his infant daughter, Elfleda, and land containing a hundred and twenty families, she built the celebrated Abbey of Streaneshalch, or Whitby, as a double cloister; and also many smaller monasteries, or cells, as they were called, at Hackness and other places, as appanages to Whitby.

From the earliest times convents of women had been established in union with, and in subjection to those of men. Thus S. Anthony, S. Pachomius, S. Augustine, and S. Benedict, had placed their sisters in convents near their own. S. Marcella at Rome, and S. Paula at Bethlehem, had dwelt thus near S. Jerome; and S. Cesarius founded a cloister for his sister near his own at Arles. But in all these cases the two foundations were quite distinct; and the abbot or bishop who ruled the men, exercised, as spiritual director only, a certain jurisdiction over the women.

⁷ Several writers have confounded S. Heiu or Heyne, with S. Bega or Bees, who belongs to a later period. *English Saints*, S. Bega, by Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 136. Bede, l. iv. c. xxiii. p. 212, note.

But among the northern races, with whom women held a higher place, a different form of united cloisters had sprung up, in which both houses were governed by the same authority, in some cases the head being the abbot, and in others the abbess. The first instance of this kind of double cloister was in Ireland, where S. Bridget's sanctity drew many men to live under her rule. S. Fridolin is said to have founded a double cloister in the beginning of the sixth century, at Säckingen, on the Rhine, and from a motive of humility to have placed himself under the abbess. But the first double cloister of this class in France, of which authentic records exist, was that of S. Radegunda at Poitiers; and this was followed by those of Faremoutier, Chelles, Andelys, Remiremont, Maubenge, Nivelles, and many others. In England the most celebrated monasteries in the seventh and eighth centuries were double cloisters, ruled by the abbess, such as Whitby, Hartlepool, Coldingham, Ely, Repton, Barking, and Wimburn⁸.

But though united by common government, discipline, and property, the inmates of the two monasteries lived quite distinct. The monks never entered the nuns' cloister, with the exception of the priest who went into the nuns' chapel to say Mass, and withdrew at its close. The nuns never left their own monastery or entered that of the monks. Not only laymen and clergy, but also bishops, were refused admittance to their cloister; and even the abbess, if she had occasion to receive advice or give orders, spoke to both clergy

⁸ Ozonam, *Civilisation Chrétienne*, c. iv. p. 118. Zell. pp. 193 – 226.

and laymen through a window, or grille⁹. Under this strict discipline, saints of both sexes grew up side by side. The double communities were universally regarded with veneration; the most famous bishops were educated in them, and slander did not dare to approach them.

S. Hilda ruled at Whitby as a queen. Nothing of importance was done in the kingdom without her concurrence. She took a leading part in the Easter controversy¹, and warmly advocated the Scotch custom, to which she was attached through her long intimacy with S. Aidan. The great synod for the final decision of the question was held in her abbey, A.D. 664, and she presided at it, as was usual with abbesses in her position; but there is no record of her having spoken on the occasion.

She established the same strict discipline at Whitby as she had already done at Hartlepool; and she "taught the observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and especially peace and charity. . . . Her prudence was so great, that not only indifferent persons, but even kings and princes, asked and received her advice. She obliged those who were under her direction to attend so much to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of piety, that many might there be found fit for ecclesiastical duties and to serve at the altar²." Five bishops of great sanctity were taken

⁹ Vit. S. Lioba, cc. i. ii. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. ii. p. 222.

¹ Bede, l. iii. c. xxv. p. 155.

² Ibid. l. iv. c. xxiii. p. 213.

out of her monastery; namely, S. John of Beverley, successively Bishop of Hexham and of York; Hedda, Bishop of Dorchester, who removed the see to Winchester; Oftfor, Bishop of Worcester; Bosa, Bishop of York, and Wilfrid, the second successor of S. Wilfrid in the see of York. The first English Christian poet, Ceadmon, was one of S. Hilda's farm-servants, and she discerned and developed his genius³.

S. Hilda died A.D. 680, and was succeeded by S. Elfleda, who had grown up from infancy under her rule, and who, at first conjointly with her mother, S. Eanfled, and afterwards alone, governed the Abbey of Whitby for thirty-five years. She held the same high position as S. Hilda, being styled the "consoler and best adviser of the whole kingdom⁴." When S. Theodore wished to make amends for his injustice to S. Wilfrid, he wrote to her as well as to Aldfrid, King of Northumbria, to obtain his restoration to his see. When Aldfrid, having despised the Pope's judgment and S. Theodore's request, was struck with remorse on his death-bed, he sent for S. Elfleda, and confessing to her his sin, he committed to her the pious task of seeing that his successor made peace with the saint for the sake of his soul. And when, shortly after, a synod was held at the river Nid, she took part in the discussion; and by her testimony as to Aldfrid's dying vow, and her own influence as a "most wise virgin,"

³ Bede, l. iv. c. xxiv. p. 217.

⁴ Eddius. Vit. S. Wilfrid, c. lviii. Gale, *Scriptores Brit. Sax. &c.* p. 85.

she succeeded in restoring unity, and thus putting an end to a scandal which had disturbed the peace of the Northumbrian Church for above five and twenty years⁵. S. Elfleda is also remarkable as the great friend of S. Cuthbert, who would quit his hermitage at her call, and would admit her to his confidence, telling her in answer to her inquiries, the future events which our Lord had revealed to him. He also at one time cured her of a dangerous illness⁶.

Another saintly princess of the royal race of Northumbria was S. Ebba, the daughter of Ethelfrid and sister of S. Oswald⁷. From her earliest youth she turned away from the pomps and pleasures of the world, and longed only to consecrate herself to the service of her Heavenly Spouse. She rejected the hand of Edan, the King of the Scots, who sought her in marriage; and after receiving the veil from S. Finan, the second Bishop of Lindisfarne, she built for herself, with her half-brother S. Oswy's help, a convent in Durham, on the river Darwent, at a place still called Ebchester. How long she remained there, or why she left it, is not known; but after some time she removed to Coldingham, in Berwickshire, where she founded a double monastery. The fame of her sanctity spread far and wide; the whole kingdom revered her as a spiritual mother; even S. Cuthbert found edification in her society, and when she sent for him, he

⁵ Gale, *Scriptores Brit. Sax. &c.* p. 86.

⁶ *Acta SS.* Feb. 8, S. Elfled. *Comment. Historic. sæc. vi.* xxxiii.

⁷ *English Saints*, S. Ebba, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 107.

would remain entire days in spiritual converse with her. But notwithstanding her own great virtues, the discipline of her monastery became relaxed. The English were remarkable, even among barbarians, for their passion for gaudy dress and feasting; and these national sins, which in the next century proved the ruin of religious life in England, crept, unobserved by Ebba, into her monastery. At length the evil was brought to her knowledge in an awful way.

There lived in the monastery an Irish monk, called S. Adamnan, who was remarkable for his unusually austere life⁸. In his youth he had committed a great sin, and being filled with horror at his own guilt and terror at God's impending judgment, he went to confession to a priest, who advised him to anticipate God's wrath and deprecate His mercy, by giving himself up as far as he was able, to fasting, reading of psalms, and prayer. In the fervor of his contrition Adamnan answered: "Father, I am young and strong, and can easily do what you command me, even though you should order me to spend the whole night in prayer standing, and to fast all the week; if only I may be saved in the Day of our Lord." The priest replied, "It is too much for you to remain the whole week without food, and it is sufficient if you fast two or three days. I will come again to you shortly, and will then tell you fully what you are to do, and how long you are to continue your penances." Soon after this the priest was unexpectedly called to

⁸ Bede, l. iv. c. xxv. p. 220.

Ireland, where he died ; so that Adamnan did not see him again. But Adamnan never forgot his injunctions nor his own promise ; and from this time to the end of his life he “ gave himself up to tears, penance, watching and fasting ; never eating or drinking except on Sundays and Thursdays. Thus what he had begun from the fear of God, he continued from Divine love.”

It happened one day that as Adamnan was returning to the abbey with a brother, as soon as he came within sight of the building he burst into tears. His companion asking why he wept, he answered, “ The time is at hand when a devouring fire will consume all this structure.” On arriving at the abbey, the brother told Ebba what Adamnan had said, whereupon she sent for him, and asked him why he had spoken thus. Then he told her, that one night as he was watching and singing psalms, a person whom he knew not, stood by him and said to him, “ You do well to spend this night-time of rest, not in sleep, but in watching and prayer For you and many more need to redeem your sins by good works. . . . But this very few do. For I, having visited the whole monastery, and looked into all the cells and beds, have found none except yourself busy about the care of his soul. But all of them, both men and women, either indulge in slothful sleep, or are awake to commit sin. Even the cells that were built for praying or reading, are now converted into places of feasting, drinking, talking, and other delights : the very virgins dedicated to God . . . whensoever they are at leisure, apply themselves to weaving

fine garments, either to use in adorning themselves like brides, to the danger of their condition, or to gain the friendship of strange men; for which reason a heavy judgment from heaven is deservedly ready to fall on this place and its inhabitants, by a devouring fire."

In great distress Ebba said to Adamnan, "Why did you not tell me this sooner?" And he answered, "I was afraid to do so . . . lest you should be too much afflicted. But you may have this comfort, that the calamity will not happen in your day."

When this vision became generally known, the monks and nuns were frightened, and began to amend their lives and do penance for their sins. But their repentance was not deep and sincere; and after S. Ebba's death, which took place before long, they returned to their sins, and became even more wicked. Then God's judgment came on the abbey, and it was destroyed by fire, A.D. 686⁹. The circumstances of the conflagration are unknown; but the above facts were told to Bede by Edgils, a priest and monk of Coldingham, who went after the fire to the Abbey of Wearmouth. Coldingham was rebuilt, and was in a flourishing condition at the time of the Danish invasions, when it was again destroyed¹.

Two queens of Northumbria, S. Etheldreda and

⁹ This date is given from English Saints, S. Adamnan, by the Rev. F. W. Faber, p. 132. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives A.D. 679; but this is evidently too early, because Egfrid and Ermenburga paid a visit to S. Ebba at Coldingham about A.D. 681.

¹ English Saints, S. Ebba, p. 133.

Ermenburga, who, under opposite circumstances, cast away their crowns and took the nun's veil, will hereafter be mentioned. But, meanwhile, another saintly Northumbrian princess claims notice. It is Heresuid, the sister of S. Hilda, and great-niece of S. Edwin, who, twice married, attained to the next highest glory after virginity which belongs to her sex, being the mother of generations of saints and abbesses; besides which, she had the honor of exchanging an earthly husband and throne for the heavenly Spouse and Kingdom. The name of her first husband is unknown, but she had by him a daughter called Sethrid. Her second husband was Anna, King of the East Angles, who also had a daughter, Ethelberga, by a former wife; and by him Heresuid had two sons and three daughters. After some time, but previous to A.D. 647², she became, with her husband's consent, a nun in the Abbey of Chelles, ten miles from Paris, which had been built by S. Clotilda, and was afterwards rebuilt and enlarged by S. Bathildes³.

Of the two sons of Anna and Heresuid, Aldwolf, who afterwards was King of the East Angles, had three daughters, of whom two in succession were abbesses of S. Hilda's Convent of Hackness; and the third, Ead-

² There is some difficulty about the time of Heresuid's religious profession. Bede says (l. iv. c. xxiii. p. 212) that she was at Chelles when S. Hilda went to East Anglia, A.D. 647, at which time Anna was still alive. Pagi supports this assertion (*Moines d'Occident*, t. v. l. xvii.). On the other hand Thomas the monk of Ely, who wrote in the twelfth century, says (*Vit. S. Etheldrit*, c. ii.) that she became a nun after her husband's death.

³ Bede, l. iv. c. viii. p. 121, note.

burga, was Abbess of Repton, and the spiritual mother and friend of S. Guthlac⁴. Their other son, S. Jaruman, Bishop of the Mercians, was a canonized saint. As to their daughters, Heresuid's daughter, S. Sethrid, and Anna's daughter, S. Ethelberga⁵, became nuns at Faremoutier, in Burgundy, where "both of them, though strangers, were, for their virtue, made abbesses." Of the three daughters of both Anna and Heresuid the eldest, S. Sexberga, married Earconbert, King of Kent, and was the mother of S. Earcongota and S. Ermenilda, and the grandmother of S. Werberga; and after her husband's death she became a nun. Another daughter, S. Witberga, founded an abbey at Dirham in Norfolk, where she lived to a great age, dying A.D. 743. The third daughter, S. Etheldreda, though twice married, lived and died the Virgin Spouse of our Lord.

From infancy S. Etheldreda⁶ was remarkable for her devotion, quitting her childish companions to pray, and having no other thought or wish than to devote herself to our Lord. When she grew up, being very beautiful, she had many suitors: but she turned in horror from them all. At length, A.D. 652, without her consent, her father gave her in marriage to Tonbert, prince of the Southern Girvii, who settled the Isle of Ely on

⁴ Moines d'Occident, t. v. l. xvii.

⁵ The French call her S. Aubierge. Bede says that she was Anna's "natural daughter," which in his time did not mean that she was illegitimate, but only that she was not an adopted child. Bede, l. iv. c. viii. p. 121, note.

⁶ Vit. S. Etheldrit. by Thomas of Ely. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 707. Bede, l. iv. c. xix. p. 204. Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 673 and 679.

her as a marriage gift. But she inspired him with such high and pure aspirations, that he lived with her as a brother for two years, when his death set her at liberty to follow her own inclinations. She then retired to her Isle of Ely, where, shut in by woods and marshes, and unnavigable streams, she dwelt with her attendants as in a desert solitude, given up entirely to prayer, fasting, and penance. Thus she spent six years, till A.D. 660, when, once more against her will, and probably on the occasion of some state exigency, she was given by her relations in marriage to Egfrid, the favorite son and successor of S. Oswy. He was greatly enamoured of her beauty and holiness, and there was nothing that he would not have done to bend her to his will. But she had bound herself to be the virgin spouse of Jesus, and like S. Agnes and S. Agatha, she would have shed her blood rather than break her troth to Him. For twelve years she lived at the Northumbrian court, arrayed in royal robes as Egfrid's wife and queen; but for all these long years she resisted every allurement and persuasion, nay, even threats; and ever making within her heart, through prayer and mortification, a temple for the Holy Spirit, she was in return preserved pure and spotless in the observance of her mystic marriage vow. At last Egfrid employed S. Wilfrid, now Bishop of York, to try and overcome her resolution, promising to give him money and lands if he could persuade her to consent to be his wife. S. Wilfrid undertook the task, but finding that she was actuated, not by a mere

womanly fancy, but by a true vocation from God, he advised her to ask Egfrid for a separation. Reluctantly and sorrowfully Egfrid granted it, and the marriage, which had never been a true Christian union, since mutual consent is essential to the Sacrament, was declared to be null and void. But from this time Egfrid ceased to look upon S. Wilfrid with affection and favor.

As soon as Etheldreda had thus recovered her liberty, A.D. 672, she went to the Abbey of Coldingham; where, laying aside her crown and her royal purple and silk robes, she received the veil and the coarse black habit of S. Benedict⁷ from S. Wilfrid, and offered herself solemnly at the altar to our Lord. She remained at Coldingham for a year, and was instructed by Ebba in the practices of religious life. Then Egfrid, being unable to overcome his love for her, came to the abbey to carry her off, and she was compelled to fly with two faithful attendants. For a week they remained hidden in a rocky hill by the sea-shore, suffering greatly from exposure and thirst, and protected by an unusually high tide, which, surrounding the hill, made it inaccessible to Egfrid's people. After a fruitless search all round the neighborhood Egfrid retired at the end of a week; and then Etheldreda issuing from her hiding-place, set off for Ely on foot and unknown, with her two companions. The journey was long and painful to one

⁷ Vit. S. Etheldrit. p. 717, note. The color of the habit shows that it was the Benedictine, and not the Irish rule, which was observed at Coldingham and Ely. The Irish habit was white.

delicately nurtured; and she suffered so terribly from fatigue and want of food, that she was supposed to have accomplished it only through miraculous aid. Once more in her island home in the fens she set to work to build the abbey, which, for well-nigh a thousand years was the sanctuary of holiness and prayer. There had formerly been at Ely a church built and dedicated to S. Andrew by S. Augustine; but Penda in one of his cruel raids, had razed it to the ground. Etheldreda now restored it, and added to it a double monastery; and when all was completed she dedicated the structure to S. Mary, the Mother of God. Happily the place was free from the jurisdiction of all the neighboring kings, so that none interfered with her, and calumny did not approach her, but she ruled alone with royal liberty. She placed herself and her community under the direction of S. Wilfrid, who consecrated her an abbess; and she acted in all things by his advice.

In this happy retreat she passed the last six years of her life, surrounded by a large family of monks and nuns, many of whom were her own relatives. She never wore linen, but only woollen garments, and would rarely⁸ indulge in the luxury, then very common in England, of taking a hot bath, unless just before any of the great festivals, as Easter, Whitsuntide, and the Epiphany; and then she did it last of all, after having, with the assistance of those about her, first washed the other servants of God there present. Moreover, she seldom ate above once a day, excepting on the great

⁸ Bede, l. iv. c. xix. p. 205. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 673—679.

solemnities, unless some urgent occasion or considerable distemper obliged her to do so. She always continued at prayer in the church from matins till it was day ; and it was said, that by the spirit of prophecy she not only foretold the pestilence of which she was to die, but also the number of those who should then be snatched out of her monastery. She died in the midst of her children, A.D. 679, and was buried in the churchyard. But sixteen years after, her body being taken up to be removed into the church, not only was it uncorrupt, but to the amazement of all the nuns, and also of S. Wilfrid and Cynefrid, the physician who had attended her on her deathbed, and who were now present, an open wound from an abscess at the time of her death was found to be healed. Many miracles were wrought at her tomb, both before and after her translation ; and the great devotion to her has lingered on to the present day. Her hand is still preserved at the Convent of S. Dominic, at Stone, in Staffordshire.

Meanwhile her sister, S. Sexberga⁹ had married Earconbert, King of Kent, the grandson of S. Ethelbert and S. Bertha, by whom she had a son, Egbert, and two daughters, S. Earcongota and S. Ermenilda.

After her husband's death, A.D. 664, she governed the kingdom for four years during her son's minority. When he came of age she threw aside her crown, and retired to a cloister which she had built in the Isle of

⁹ Vit. S. Etheldrit. c. ii. p. 708, and c. xxv. p. 729. Zell. l. i. c. vii. p. 97. Bede, l. iii. c. viii. p. 121 ; l. iv. c. xix. p. 205. Acta SS. Julii 6. S. Sexburga.

Sheppey, where she governed seventy-seven nuns as their abbess. But after five years, from motives of humility and a desire to apply herself more exclusively to the care of her own soul, she placed her daughter, Ermenilda, now a widow, as abbess over her convent, and became a simple nun under her sister S. Etheldreda. After S. Etheldreda's death, however, she was chosen to be abbess, and governed the Abbey of Ely for twenty years.

S. Sexberga's daughter, S. Earcongota, was a nun at Faremoutier, where the tradition of her wonderful virtues and miracles long remained. When the time of her death approached, she saw in a vision a number of men, all in white, enter the monastery; and asking them, "What do you want, and why come you hither?" they answered, "We are sent to carry away the gold medal that was brought hither from Kent." That same night, at break of dawn, leaving the darkness of this world, she departed to the light of heaven. At the same hour several monks of the abbey, who were in other houses, heard choirs of angels singing; and going out to see what it might be, they beheld an extraordinary great light coming down from heaven, which conducted that holy soul, set loose from the bonds of the flesh, to the eternal joys of the celestial country."

S. Sexberga's other daughter, S. Ermenilda, married Wulfhere, King of the Mercians. In her station as a queen, she softened the hearts of her husband's Pagan

¹ Bede, l. iii. c. viii. p. 122.

subjects by her gentleness, her modest demeanour, and her works of charity, and thus drew them to Christianity². After her husband's death, she too laid aside her crown and became a nun, and eventually abbess in her mother S. Sexberga's convent in the Isle of Sheppey, as has already been told. But after a time she also was drawn to the Abbey of Ely, where she succeeded S. Sexberga as the third abbess³.

S. Ermenilda had an only daughter, S. Werberga, who gave herself up in her youth to the religious life under her great-aunt, S. Etheldreda. Her uncle, S. Ethelred, was so struck with her prudence, talent, and holiness, that he placed her over all the convents of women in his kingdom. Thus she governed the Abbeys of Weedon, Trentham, and Hanbury. It happened one day, that she saw the steward of the Abbey of Weedon ill-treating a poor shepherd, who led a very holy life. Falling on her knees before him, she cried, "For the love of God spare this innocent man: for he is more acceptable than you and I in the sight of Him, who beholds all our actions from His throne in heaven." Her remonstrances being unheeded by the brutal fellow, she turned to God for help. Suddenly the steward found himself paralyzed and crippled; when, terrified and contrite, he threw himself before her, and, beseeching her to have pity on him, obtained his cure through her intercession⁴.

² Acta SS. Feb. 13, p. 686. S. Ermenilda, Vit. Epitom. ex Capgrav. c. xxiii.

³ Vit. S. Etheldrit. cc. xviii. xxxvi. p. 724.

⁴ Acta SS. Feb. 3. S. Wereburg. xii. p. 389.

After some years, from lowliness of spirit she resigned her dignity in Mercia, and became a nun in the Abbey of Sheppey, where, however, she soon succeeded her mother as abbess. Once more she laid down her rank, and went as a nun to Ely; and on her mother's death she was again chosen abbess. But still impelled by humility and the love of obscurity, she for the third time gave up her crozier, and died as a simple nun⁵. The beautiful cathedral of Chester was in Catholic times the abbey church of S. Werberga, and thither in the tenth century her relics were translated from Ely, to save them from desecration by the Danes.

There was another family of saints in the royal house of Mercia, who, like S. Ermenilda and S. Werberga, were also the descendants of S. Ethelbert and S. Bertha. Their son, Eadbald, had two sons, Earconbert, who succeeded him and married S. Sexberga, and Ermenred⁶, who also had the title of king under his brother, and had two sons and two daughters. His sons, S. Ethelbert and S. Ethelred⁷, were youths of great promise; but their cousin, Egbert, King of Kent, allowed them to be treacherously killed by Thunner, one of his generals, whose enmity they had incurred. Ermenred's daughter, S. Ermenburga, or Domneva⁸, married Merval, brother to Wulfhere, King of Mercia, by whom she had a son, Mervin, who died in childhood,

⁵ Vit. S. Etheldrit. cc. xvii. xxxvi. pp. 724, 756.

⁶ Anglo-Sax. Chron. an. 640.

⁷ Acta SS. Oct. 17. SS. Ethelbert and Ethelred.

⁸ This name is supposed to be a corruption of her title *Domina abbatisa*.

and three daughters, S. Milburga, S. Mildreda, and S. Milgitha. After her husband's death, S. Ermenburga returned to Kent, where having received from her cousin, King Egbert, a large piece of land in the Isle of Thanet, in payment for her brothers' blood, she built on the spot where S. Augustine had landed, a convent for seventy nuns, and dedicated it to S. Mary, Ever Virgin and Mother of God. When it was finished she placed her daughter, S. Mildreda, over it as abbess, and she and her sister, S. Ermengitha, both lived in subjection to her as simple nuns⁹. Another daughter, S. Milburga, built the Abbey of Wenlock, in which she was abbess; and the third daughter, S. Milgitha, was a nun in the convent of one of her sisters, but whether at Wenlock, or in the Isle of Thanet, is not known¹.

It has been already pointed out that S. Ethelberga, S. Eanfled, and S. Elfleda, and also S. Eadburga and S. Eanswitha, formed three generations of S. Ethelbert's and S. Bertha's family of saints. S. Ermenilda and S. Werberga, S. Ermenburga, her two brothers, her sister, and her three daughters, add the fourth and fifth steps in the saintly pedigree. Nor did the chain end with them. For in S. Boniface's correspondence² are found Caugyth, and her daughter, Eadburga or Bugga, both of them abbesses; and being relatives of Ethelbert II., King of Kent, no doubt they were, like

⁹ M. S. Saxonie, *Narratio de Sanctis qui requiescunt in terra Anglorum*. Acta SS. 17 Oct. p. 101.

¹ Vit. S. Milburg. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. l. i. p. 420. Vit. S. Etheldrit. c. xvii.

² Epp. S. Bonifac. 30—32, 84, Wurd. 38. 2. 20. 40, Serar.

him, descendants of S. Ethelbert and S. Bertha. Little is known about them, but Eadburga is believed to have been the saint of that name, who succeeded S. Mildreda as Abbess of Thanet, and built the abbey church, in which she was buried³.

Several other descendants of the terrible Pagan king, Penda, were remarkable for their Christian virtues. The piety and zeal of his sons Peada and Wulfhere, have already been mentioned. His three other sons, Ethelred, Merval, and Mercelon, all appear as saints in the royal genealogy of Mercia; though the names of the two last, as saints, are not now to be found in any ecclesiastical record⁴. Also two of his daughters, S. Kineburga or Kinefrida, and S. Kineswitha, vowed themselves as virgins to our Lord⁵, and after uniting with their brothers in the foundation of the Abbey of Peterborough, built for themselves a monastery two miles from it, where they spent their lives in great sanctity. They were buried in the Abbey of Peterborough, together with a relative, S. Tibba, of whom nothing is known, except that she led a saintly life in solitude⁶. They were held in such great veneration, that when the abbey was burnt and all the monks

³ Vit. S. Cuthburg. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. MS. Saxon. Acta SS. 17 Oct. p. 101.

⁴ Acta SS. Feb. 8, S. Ermenilda. Comment. Historic. ii. xii. p. 688.

⁵ Acta SS. Mart. vi. S. Kineburga, S. Kineswitha, et S. Tibba, i. 2. S. Kineburga has been confounded by William of Malmesbury and his followers with her sister Cynburga, who married Oswy's eldest son, Alchfrid.

⁶ Ibid. ii. 14.

except one were killed by the Danes, A.D. 870, the preservation of their relics was the first care of the sole survivor⁷.

In the latter half of the seventh century there began a movement which added two remarkable characteristics of the conversion of England to those already mentioned. Scarcely had this island of pirates received the faith, when, suddenly emerging from barbarism, it tended to become one of the chief seats of learning in the West, and the source whence Christianity and civilization flowed to their barbarian and Pagan kindred in their old German home. England was the place where pure German ideas and the culture of Christian Rome met together. The first German, as it has been observed, who made himself master of the treasures of learning bequeathed by antiquity, was an Englishman, the Venerable Bede; while the first German dialect, in which history was written and laws were drawn up, was that of England⁸. In this educational and missionary movement the women of England took their part, under the guidance of West Saxon princesses. Its centre was the Abbey of Barking in the kingdom of the East Saxons, and its offshoot, the Abbey of Wimburn in that of the West Saxons.

The Abbey of Barking⁹ was built by S. Earconwald, afterwards Bishop of London, for his sister S. Ethelberga, at the same time that he built for himself the Abbey of Chertsey, in Surrey. At Barking S. Ethel-

⁷ S. Kineburga, &c. ii. 8, 9. ⁸ Ranke, *Englische Geschichte*, 17.

⁹ Bede, l. iv. c. vi. p. 184.

berga conducted herself in all respects as became the sister of so saintly a bishop, being eminent for her piety, the religious discipline of her community, and her supernatural gifts. Thus she became "the mother and nurse of many devout women," and the abbey maintained its high character for nine hundred years, till its dissolution in the sixteenth century¹. S. Ethelberga was succeeded, A.D. 676, by S. Hildelith, "who governed the monastery till she was of an extreme old age²." She not only kept up monastic discipline, but also encouraged her nuns to apply themselves to the study of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers, so that her community became famous for its learning, no less than for its virtue and devotion. S. Aldhelm dedicated his Latin book, "*De Laudibus Virginitatis*," to her and her nuns, whom he addressed thus: "Hail, flowers of the Church, sisters, monastic disciples, Christ's scholastic pearls, gems of paradise, and partakers of the heavenly country³!"

One of the nuns whose name appears in this dedication is S. Cuthburga, the sister of S. Ina, and the foundress of the Abbey of Wimburn. She was married to Aldfrid, the illegitimate⁴ son of S. Oswy, who succeeded his half brother, Egfrid, as King of Northumbria; but after a time they separated by mutual

¹ Acta SS. Aug. 31. S. Cuthburg. Comment. Præv. sæc. ii. xi. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. Vit. S. Cuthburg.

² Bede, l. iv. c. x. p. 138.

³ S. Cuthburg. ii. xii.

⁴ Bede, Hist. Eccles. l. iv. c. xxvi. p. 224. Vit. S. Cuthbert, c. xxiv. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 863.

consent⁵, and Cuthburga, who from her childhood had ardently longed to devote herself to God alone, laid aside her crown and royal robes, and became a nun in the Abbey of Barking.

After spending some years at Barking, S. Cuthburga, with the aid of S. Ina and S. Coenburga her sister, built the double monastery of Wimburn. Here she was joined by S. Coenburga, who seems to have succeeded her as abbess⁶. And here, too, came S. Ethelburga, S. Ina's queen, who ended her days as a nun, while her husband died a monk at Rome. After the royal sisters, the abbey was governed by the Abbesses Eadburga and Tetta. The former corresponded in Latin with S. Boniface⁷, and was skilled in writing and Latin versification, in which latter she instructed S. Lioba⁸. It was under Tetta's rule that S. Lioba and S. Walburga, both of them of the royal race of Wessex, with a host of other nuns, went forth from Wimburn as missionaries to Germany.

There is still another royal English nun, S. Frideswide⁹, the daughter of Didan, one of the under-

⁵ There is a difference of opinion as to the circumstances of this separation. Mabillon, Capgrave, and others, assert that the marriage was null and void, as in S. Etheldreda's case; but the Bollandist, John Stilling, takes the opposite view, and believes that she was the mother of Osred, Aldfrid's son and successor. The silence of both Bede and the Saxon Chronicle, an. 741, strengthens the latter opinion.

⁶ Vit. S. Cuthburg. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. p. 424. Mabillon gives A.D. 724, and the English Martyrology A.D. 727, as the date of S. Cuthburga's death.

⁷ Epp. S. Bonifac. 16—20, Wurd. 7. 13. 14. 21. 28, Serar.

⁸ Ibid. 21, Wurd. 36, Serar.

⁹ Vit. S. Frideswid. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 524.

kings of Wessex, and the patron saint of Oxford. Her father built, A.D. 727, a church and a monastery dedicated to the Blessed Trinity and S. Mary, Ever Virgin and Mother of God, where, with his consent, she vowed herself to our Lord. Some time after, her father being dead, Algar, a powerful under-king in the neighborhood, wished to marry her, and resolved to carry her off by force. She accordingly fled by night with two companions, and going in a boat down the Thames to Abingdon, she remained hid in a wood for three years, living in solitude and enduring great hardships.

All the old writers say¹, that when Algar found that she was gone, he threatened to destroy the town of Oxford; but as he was about to enter the gates, he was struck with sudden blindness, from which he was cured only by the intercession of S. Frideswide. Hence arose a popular superstition, extending even to the time of the Normans, that it was dangerous for a king to enter Oxford.

At the end of three years S. Frideswide returned to Oxford, but not to the monastery that her father had built; for having become enamoured of solitude, she took up her abode in a marsh overgrown with rushes at Binsey near Oxford, where she built a rude hermitage and oratory for herself and her companions. One day she went into Oxford, and as she passed crowds gathered to gaze at her with love and admiration. Among them came a leper, from whose touch all shrank with fear and horror. Standing aloof, he cried

¹ Acta SS. 19 October. S. Frideswida, c. xxix.

with a loud voice, "I adjure thee, holy virgin, by the Almighty God, to give me a kiss in the name of His only Begotten Son Jesus Christ." Inspired by Divine love, S. Frideswide rushed through the crowd, and, making the sign of the cross over the leper, gave him the kiss of peace. Instantly the scales began to fall from him, and in a very short time his skin was as clean and pure as that of a child.

S. Frideswide died A.D. 740, and was buried in the church which her father had built at Oxford. Her tomb and her oratory at Binsey, were for eight centuries favorite places of pilgrimage; and still in the church of Binsey may be seen the empty niche in which her image stood, and the "stone pavement worn away by many feet and many kisses".

At the time of the massacre of the Danes in the reign of Ethelred, A.D. 1004, a crowd of Danes having fled to S. Frideswide's tomb, the church was sacrilegiously burnt down. In reparation Ethelred rebuilt it and endowed it richly; and in the following century it passed into the possession of the Canons of S. Augustine. Thus it remained till the reign of Henry VIII., when Cardinal Wolsey dissolved the priory, and made over its property to the College of Christ Church which he was founding; and soon after, on the establishment of the new religion, S. Frideswide's church became the cathedral of Oxford. Her tomb continued, however, to be venerated till the reign of Elizabeth, when, in a diabolical spirit of mockery, the

² Christian Schools and Scholars, vol. ii. c. iv. p. 144.

bones of an infamous woman were mixed up with her relics, so as to prevent their being distinguished till the last trumpet shall sound and the dead shall arise, and God's judgment shall eternally sever the sinner and the saint.

This catalogue of saintly English queens and princesses would be incomplete without the name of S. Bathildes³, a noble Englishwoman by birth, and a queen of France by marriage. Having been taken captive in war, she came as a slave into the possession of Clovis II., who compelled her against her will to marry him. After his death she governed France during the minority of her two sons; and during this time she founded the Abbey of Corbie, and rebuilt and enlarged that of Chelles. When both her sons were of age she resigned her royal dignity, and took the veil in the Abbey of Chelles, where she died as one of the community about A.D. 680.

³ Vit. S. Bathild. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 742. Rohrbacher, x. l. xlix. p. 276.

CHAPTER VII.

ENGLISH BISHOPS AND ABBOTS.

To commemorate all the saintly bishops and abbots who at this time governed the English Church, would far exceed our limits. But, besides those who have already been mentioned in connexion with the conversion of England, there are a few others who may well be selected for notice, not only because their names stand out prominently in the history of the age, but also because their memory is still celebrated year by year at every English altar. Such are S. Cuthbert, S. Benedict Biscop, S. Wilfrid, S. Chad, and S. John of Beverley. They were all contemporaries, and though each had his own distinct field of labor, yet all were, in one way or another, connected with S. Wilfrid, who is thus the central figure of the group; and consequently their histories cannot be totally separated, but must be given side by side with each other. To begin, then, with S. Cuthbert.

S. Cuthbert¹ was born of poor parents in the south-

¹ Vit. S. Cuthbert, by Bede. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 844.
Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. iv. c. xxvii. p. 225.

east of Scotland, not far from the River Tweed. When he was eight years of age he happened one day to be amusing himself with athletic sports, in which he excelled, when a very young child who stood by reproached him for playing with children, since God intended him to be a bishop and a teacher of virtue to his elders. These chance words made a great impression on him, and from this time he gave himself up to prayer and religious practices.

As he grew to manhood he received many favors from God in answer to his prayers. It happened one day that the monks of an adjacent abbey on the coast, having been sent to some distance to fetch wood, were returning home on rafts, when suddenly the wind rose and the rafts began to drift out to sea. All the monks within the abbey assembled on the shore, and prayed earnestly for their brethren who were in such imminent peril; but at a little distance was collected a crowd of Pagans, who enjoyed the sight and laughed at their trouble. In this crowd stood Cuthbert, who said to those around him, "Brethren, why do you laugh at those whom you see drawing near to death. It would be better to pray to God for them than to laugh at their distress." But the Pagans answered angrily, "No man will pray for, and no God will have mercy on, those who destroy the old worship and set up new customs, which no one has ever heard of." Then Cuthbert knelt down, and bowing to the earth, prayed aloud; and as the prayer issued from his lips, the wind veered round and wafted the rafts safely to shore.

At this sight the Pagans were awe-struck, and greatly lauded Cuthbert's faith and charity.

One night in the year 651, he was up in the hills tending sheep, and while his companions slept he watched and prayed. All on a sudden a bright light illumined the darkness, and he beheld choirs of angels descend, and soon mount again to the gates of heaven, bearing with them a soul resplendent with glory. Waking his companions he called on them to praise God, because the soul of some saint had just been borne from this world of darkness to the mansions of glory and the blissful sight of Christ the King. And so indeed it proved; for they heard next morning, that during that same night S. Aidan had died.

This vision and other tokens of God's favor which were vouchsafed to S. Cuthbert, infused such grace and love into his heart, that he resolved to give up all earthly things and devote himself to the attainment of that heavenly glory, of which a glimpse had been granted him.

He therefore set out for the Abbey of Melrose, which was then attached to that of Lindisfarne, hoping to gain admittance to the community. As he alighted from his horse and was entering the church to pray, he met Boisil the prior, who, turning to the monks around him, said, "Behold a servant of God in whom is no guile." Boisil, on learning his wish, gave him a hearty welcome, and after a few days presented him to Eata, the Abbot of Lindisfarne and Melrose, who tonsured him.

Cuthbert spent some years at Melrose, diligently applying himself to study, manual labor, and prayer, watching every word and act of his master Boisil, and striving to imbibe his spirit. For Boisil was a very saintly man, endowed with the gift of prophecy and other supernatural graces. When Cuthbert had thus been trained to monastic life, he went with Eata to Ripon, which Alchfrid, who governed Deira for his father, S. Oswy, had given him for the foundation of a monastery.

At Ripon Cuthbert filled the office of guest-master. Happening, early one cold winter's morning, to go to the cell set apart for guests, he found a young man sitting there. He accordingly fetched water, washed and dried the guest's feet, and rubbed his benumbed hands; and perceiving that he was much exhausted by the night journey through storm and snow, he invited him to wait till the third hour, when he should be able to bring him some food. But the young man was impatient to be gone, as the house to which he was bound was a long way off. Still, however, Cuthbert pressed him to wait, lest he should faint on the way; and at last he adjured him so earnestly in God's name to stay, that the stranger was compelled to do so. As soon as the office for tierce was finished Cuthbert laid the table, and placing some food on it, he said to his guest, "I entreat thee, brother, to eat, while I go and fetch some hot bread, which I hope is now taken out of the oven." Quickly he went, but on his return the guest was gone, though the untrodden snow, which lay

thick all around, showed no trace of human footstep. But from the spot where the stranger had sat, there issued an unearthly perfume; and on the table lay three small hot loaves, which surpassed the lily in whiteness, the rose in fragrance, and honey in sweetness. Then Cuthbert exclaimed, "Behold! it was an angel whom I entertained, who came to feed, and not to be fed. What wonder that he should refuse earthly food, who partakes of the Bread of Life eternally in heaven?"

After some short time Alchfrid, finding that Eata was much attached to the Scottish customs, while he himself preferred those of Rome, took the land at Ripon from him and gave it to S. Wilfrid. Cuthbert then returned to Melrose and lived, as before, in obedience to Boisil. But on Boisil's death he took his place as prior, which office he retained till A.D. 664, when Eata removed him to Lindisfarne, in order that he might, by his authority and example, train the monks to the Benedictine rule², which was now being adopted in all the English monasteries.

Both at Melrose and Lindisfarne Cuthbert, not satisfied with leading his own monks to perfection, strove to convert the people far and near from a worldly life to the love of God. For many Christians profaned the faith by their wicked acts, while others, in a time of mortality, neglected the Sacraments, and had recourse to magic and other Pagan practices. In order to

² Vit. S. Cuthbert, a monacho coevo anonym. Lindisfarn. c. iii. note. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 855.

correct these errors, Cuthbert often went out of the monastery, sometimes on horseback, but more often on foot, and repaired to the neighboring towns, where he preached the way of truth to those that were gone astray. For it was then the custom of the English when a monk or priest came into a town, to flock together to hear his word, willingly listening to what he said, and more willingly practising those things that they could hear and understand. Cuthbert's preaching was so eloquent, so persuasive, and so forcible, and such an angelic brightness shone in his face, that his hearers, feeling sure that nothing could be concealed from him, would confess to him the most hidden secrets of their hearts, and would faithfully perform such penance for their sins as he would enjoin. He would chiefly go to such villages as were placed high up amid craggy mountains and frightful precipices, the inhabitants of which were so poor and barbarous, and so hard of access, that other teachers were not in the habit of visiting them. So great was his love for those poor isolated boors, that when he went among them he would often stay a week, and sometimes two or three, or even a month, away from his monastery, allured on by their simple fervor, and in turn exciting them by his sweet eloquence and saintly example, to give themselves to God and to heavenly contemplation.

Meanwhile he did not relax his own practices of devotion. He would often keep vigil for three or four nights in succession, praying and singing psalms, and

sometimes doing manual work, or walking round the island, to shake off drowsiness. On one occasion, when he was at Coldingham, the monk who accompanied him noticed, that after spending the day in conversation with S. Ebba, he quitted the monastery when night closed in; and being curious to know whither he went, he watched him secretly. Then, to his amazement, he beheld him walk into the ocean waves up to his neck, and chant the praises of God, while the fishes clustered around him, as if they would join in his canticle to the honor of their common Creator.

So great was the fervor with which Cuthbert said Mass, and so deep the contrition which pierced his heart as he offered the Holy Sacrifice, that his voice would be scarcely audible through his tears, and it would be by sighs rather than words, that before the Preface, he would call on the people to raise their hearts and give thanks to God.

Years rolled on; and as Cuthbert advanced in the spiritual life, a great yearning for solitude grew upon him. When he had been twelve years at Lindisfarne, he retired to a small rocky island called Farne at some little distance from the coast, which was quite barren and uninhabited, and had a bad name as being haunted by evil spirits. As he was leaving the monastery he said to the brethren, "If it shall please God to grant me to live there by the labor of my hands, I will stay; but if not, I will, by God's permission, very soon return to you."

The evil spirits quickly fled at the command of God's

servant. With the help of his brethren he built two cells for himself, one of which was to serve for an oratory. There being no water near, he bade them dig a hole in the stony rock on which they stood; and the next day, in answer to his prayers, it was found full of water, and continued to supply his wants so long as he remained in the island. At the sowing season the monks brought him some wheat, which he sowed; but not a stalk or a leaf sprouted from it. He then ordered the monks to bring him some barley. "For," said he, "it may be the nature of the soil, or the will of God, that wheat will not grow, while barley may produce me sufficient food." And so it proved, for though the barley was sown late, it yielded a fine crop; and thus he had the means of living by the labor of his hands, as he wished to do.

In this hermitage Cuthbert led a life similar to that of the Fathers of the Thebaid. Abiding ever in close communion with God, all nature seemed to be bound in subjection to him. The little birds, at his bidding, refrained from plucking his growing corn. The crows, at his command in the name of their Creator and his, forbore to tear the straw from his roof. The waves brought to his shore a plank, with which his brethren had forgotten to supply him. Many persons, too, of all classes, from far and near, flocked to him for advice or consolation. He spoke to them from the window of his cell, as had been the custom of the old Fathers; and none went away from him unsatisfied. For so great was his spiritual experience, and so full was he

of Divine love and unction, that he could sympathize with the sorrows and difficulties of all his visitors, or dispel the delusions which troubled them; while, by his gift of prophecy, he could calm their fears, or inspire them with courage to meet impending misfortunes; and by his miraculous powers he would heal many a sickness, and restore joy to many a mourning heart. But sweet as was this solitude, Cuthbert knew that it would not last to the end of his life; and he would often say to his brethren, "My saintly master, Boisil, told me all that would befall me. One thing alone now remains unfulfilled, which God grant may never come to pass!"

Meanwhile, leaving him in his island cell, let us turn to S. Wilfrid, whose name has already been incidentally mentioned.

S. Wilfrid was born³ about A.D. 634. His parents were noble, but what were their names, or where they lived, is not known. His birth was marked by one of those prodigies so common in the lives of saints. For at the moment he was born a heavenly light enveloped the house, so that the neighbors ran to see if it were on fire, or whether some celestial visitant had entered it.

His mother died when he was very young; and, his father marrying again, he suffered so much from the

³ Vit. S. Wilfrid, by Eddi Stephani, his precentor, Gale, p. 40. Ibid. by Fridogod, an English monk of the tenth century, Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 150. Ibid. by Eadmer, S. Anselm's secretary, Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 176. Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. v. c. xix. p. 268.

violence of his stepmother, that before he had completed his fourteenth year, with his characteristic fearlessness and decision, he asked of his father arms, horses, and attendants befitting his rank, and set out to seek his fortune at S. Oswy's court. Great personal beauty, pure and simple manners, a joyous temper which never was ruffled, and rare powers of speech, quickly gained him friends on every side, and secured him the favor of the queen, S. Eanfled.

But beneath the worldly pursuits which now occupied Wilfrid, there lay deeper thoughts; and before very long he confided to the saintly queen, that it was to the service of the heavenly King, rather than that of an earthly prince, that he aspired. Then, by her advice and aid, and with his father's consent, he laid aside his military accoutrements and went to the Abbey of Lindisfarne with an old noble, called Chad, who wished to become a monk there.

Wilfrid spent several years at Lindisfarne, beloved alike by young and old, and distinguished by the perfection with which, though untutored, he practised the monastic virtues of humility, obedience, and charity. He also learned the Psalter by heart, and mastered the usual subjects of study.

After the lapse of some years there arose in his heart a great desire to behold the successor of St. Peter, and obtain the Apostolic blessing and absolution for his sins. His master perceiving that his wish came from God, he applied to his patroness, S. Eanfled, who sent him to her cousin Earconbert, King of Kent, with

a letter requesting him to forward him on his way to Rome.

The faith being still new in England, the road to Rome was as yet almost untrodden by English pilgrims; and Wilfrid was detained five years in Kent before he could meet with any one with whom he could travel. But this time was not lost to him. For the chair of Canterbury was then filled by Honorius, a very learned man, who taught him much that was new to him, and especially the Roman customs on many ecclesiastical matters. Meanwhile he followed the monastic rule of prayer, fast, vigil, and reading, and Earconbert "loved him marvellously."

At length there arrived in Kent one, who through life was no less remarkable than Wilfrid for his great love of Rome, and his zeal in introducing Roman customs and learning into England. This was S. Benedict Biscop, of whom it was said by one who knew him well⁴, that being an Angle noble by birth, he was still more noble in mind by his constant communion with the Angels. Like his great namesake, truly was he Benedictus, or blessed, both by name and by grace; for, from his earliest childhood, he was wise above his years, pure and grave in conduct, and aspiring only to join that virgin choir who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

He filled a high office at S. Oswy's court, and held large estates suited to his rank. But when he was

⁴ Bede. Vit. S. Benedict Biscop. c. i. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 962. Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. iv. c. xviii. p. 202; l. v. c. xix. p. 270.

about twenty-five years of age he left his home, his kindred, his possessions, and his native land, for the love of Christ, and set out on pilgrimage to Rome, looking forward to receive a hundredfold and life eternal in the world to come. On his return from this pilgrimage he never ceased to tell all around him what glorious things he had beheld, trying to inspire them with the same love and veneration for the Roman Church as inflamed his own breast.

King Alchfrid was so stirred by his eloquent narrations, that he made preparations for accompanying him to Rome; but his father, S. Oswy, hearing of his intention, forbade him to leave the kingdom. Benedict, therefore, set out alone; and as he passed through Kent, the youth Wilfrid was committed to his care by both Earconbert and Eanfled.

The precise date of Benedict's and Wilfrid's departure is unknown; but as they left England during Honorius's archiepiscopate, it must have been at latest in the year 654, when Honorius died. They travelled together as far as Lyons, where, Wilfrid being ill, Benedict left him with the Archbishop S. Delphinus⁵, and proceeded alone to Rome. After spending some months there, he went to Lerins, where he received the tonsure. He remained for two years at Lerins, diligently following the monastic discipline; and then, drawn away by his great devotion to S. Peter, he once

⁵ S. Delphinus is commonly honored in France under the name of S. Chaumont. English Saints, S. Wilfrid, p. 15, by the Rev. F. W. Faber. Rohrbacher, lx. l. xlix. p. 286.

more retraced his steps to the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, where he took up his abode for above ten years.

Meanwhile Wilfrid had been well cared for in Lyons. At the first glance S. Delphinus had been attracted to the youth by that bright English beauty which had so captivated S. Gregory, and which, now crowned by Divine grace, betokened such purity and strength. On further acquaintance he became so much attached to him, that he offered to adopt him, to give him his niece in marriage, and to get him a good appointment in Gaul. But Wilfrid answered, "I have vows which I must pay to the Lord. I have left, like Abraham, my kindred and my father's house to visit the Apostolic See, and learn the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, that my country may make proof of them in God's service; and I would fain receive from God for leaving father and home, honor and lands, what He hath promised to those that love Him, a hundredfold now, and hereafter, eternal life. If it please God, I will see your face again on my return."

Having now spent a year with S. Delphinus, Wilfrid went on to Rome. His first visit was to S. Peter's, to worship at the Apostle's tomb and receive absolution for his sins. His next was to the Church of S. Andrew, to whom there was great devotion in England, and especially in Kent. Diffident and anxious lest hitherto he had run in vain, he knelt down before the altar, on which lay the book of the Gospels, and he prayed humbly and fervently to S. Andrew, to obtain for him

grace to read that book aright, and to preach "the eloquence of the evangelists" to the people. Soon after he gained the friendship of Archdeacon Boniface, who was secretary to two successive Popes; and he considered this acquaintance as an answer to his prayer. For Boniface, being struck with his application to prayer and study, did all that he could to help him, and taught him the right computation of Easter, and many points of ecclesiastical discipline which he could not have learned in his own country. He also presented him to the Holy Father, who, on hearing what had drawn him to Rome, blessed him and the purpose of his journey.

After the lapse of some months Wilfrid quitted Rome, and on his way back to England stopped at Lyons. Here he lingered for three years, studying with S. Delphinus, and after a time receiving from him "S. Peter's tonsure," the symbol of our Lord's Crown of Thorns, and of his own consecration to His service⁶. So tender was the friendship that united the bishop and his young cleric, that they could not resolve to part, till at last a rude blow came to separate them. At this time the Merovingian monarchy was sinking into imbecility and decrepitude, and France was a bone of contention between rival mayors of the palace and turbulent nobles. Ebroin, the famous Mayor of

⁶ S. Peter's tonsure is that now adopted by all Latin priests. The Eastern tonsure, sometimes called S. Paul's, consisted in shaving the whole head. The Irish shaved the fore-part of the head, leaving the hair on the back part; and this was called by its opponents Simon Magus's tonsure.

Neustria during the minority of the sons of Clovis and the regency of their mother, S. Bathildes, attempted to consolidate the Frank empire by imposing the same code of laws on the whole. The Austrasian nobles rose in defence of their national customs and rights; and as the Church has always been the advocate of liberty and order, S. Leger, Bishop of Autun, supported by S. Delphinus, took the lead in protesting against Ebroin's tyranny'. S. Delphinus, having fallen into Ebroin's hands, was condemned to be beheaded. The execution took place at Chalons-sur-Saône, about A.D. 657⁸; and S. Delphinus forbade Wilfrid to follow him to the scaffold. But Wilfrid for the first time disobeyed him, saying, "What is better than for father and son to die together, and be with Christ together?" S. Delphinus was beheaded⁹, and Wilfrid, throwing off his clothes, stood joyfully awaiting his martyr's palm. But the captains asked, "Who is that beautiful youth who is preparing himself for death?" And when they were told, "He is one of the Angles beyond the sea from Britain," they replied, "Spare him, and touch him not." Thus was Wilfrid allowed the honor to be, like S. John the Evangelist, a martyr in will; but it was by a long suffering life, and not by a bloody

⁷ Michelet, *Histoire de France*, t. i. l. ii. c. i.

⁸ Rohrbacher, t. x. l. xlix. p. 286.

⁹ Both Bede and Eddius accuse S. Bathildes of this massacre; but she was so far from countenancing the outrages now committed against the clergy, that the nobles, fearing her anger on account of their murder of Sigebert, Bishop of Paris, allowed her to become a nun in the convent of Chelles, as she had long wished. Vit. S. Bathildes. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 742*, note. Rohrbacher, vol. x. l. xlix. p. 276.

death, that God had appointed him to win his eternal crown.

After burying his friend and father, Wilfrid returned to his native land, to which long years of absence since his early youth, had made him a stranger. But wherever Wilfrid went he soon won friends. Scarcely had he arrived in Northumbria, when Alchfrid, having heard from Cenwealh, King of Wessex, of the young pilgrim's arrival, sent for him. Alchfrid's devotion to Rome had not cooled since the time when his father had prevented his going thither with Benedict Biscop; and when Wilfrid entered his presence, he fell at his feet and asked his blessing, regarding him with deep veneration as one who came from the threshold of the Apostles. He looked up to him as a master while he loved him as a friend, and followed his advice in all ecclesiastical matters. He gave him the land of ten families at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, to build a monastery; and soon after he gave him the land of thirty families at Ripon, which he had formerly given to Eata, Abbot of Lindisfarne, but had afterwards resumed because he could not induce Eata to follow the Roman way.

Wilfrid had now the opportunity of promoting Catholic customs and unity, to which he had devoted himself. He built a large monastery at Ripon and dedicated it to S. Peter; and a cell, or small monastery, at Stamford¹. He placed both under the Benedictine

¹ In the reign of William the Conqueror the Abbey of Stamford was rebuilt in a magnificent style, and dedicated to S. Leonard the hermit of Bruges. *English Saints*, S. Wilfrid, p. 18.

rule, which he thus introduced into the north of England, where hitherto all the monasteries had been under the rule of S. Columba. As abbot he was remarkable for his humility, his charity to the poor, his austere life, and his constant prayer. His fame spread far and near, and through his influence many adopted the Roman customs.

In the year 660 Cenwealh having deprived Agilbert, Bishop of the West Saxons, of half his diocese and given it to Wini, Agilbert threw up the bishopric and retired to the court of Alchfrid. Here he became acquainted with Wilfrid; and when, after some time, Alchfrid asked him to ordain Wilfrid to the priesthood, as being a person of great learning and virtue, he answered, that such a man ought to be a bishop. He accordingly ordained him priest at Ripon, about A.D. 662 or 663.

The Easter controversy, which had already given trouble to S. Augustine and S. Columban, was constantly rising in importance. In the year 630 the Bishops of Leinster and Munster met in synod at Magh-lene, or Leighlin, to discuss the question. Then, "in accordance with S. Patrick's canon, that 'when causes were of great moment they should be referred to the head of cities,' they judged it proper to send wise and humble men, as children to their mother, . . . who, having reached Rome in safety, . . . found Greek and Oriental, Scythian and Egyptian, all celebrating Easter together in S. Peter's Church; and before the Holy of Holies, they attested" to the Irish bishops on their

return, "Throughout the whole world Easter is, as we know, thus kept²." Accordingly, the bishops of the South of Ireland "with one accord, issued a mandate to keep Easter the following year in unison with the whole Church³."

The Archbishop of Armagh, and the chief clergy of the north of Ireland, followed the example of their southern brethren, A.D. 640, and addressed a letter to Pope Severinus. The Roman Chair was vacant when their letter reached Rome; and though the Roman clergy answered it, yet, misunderstanding the question, they condemned only the Quartodeciman heresy, whereupon the northern Irish, believing themselves free from censure, adhered to the old custom⁴ till A.D. 703, when they were induced to give it up by Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, who had been convinced of his error by Ceolfred, the Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow⁵.

In Northumbria this controversy began to attract attention from the time of S. Oswy's marriage with S. Eanfled, who adhered to the Roman custom as practised in Kent; and still more after the arrival of Wilfrid. The difference was most apparent at court, where King Oswy, having completed his Lent fast, made a great feast with his nobles on Easter Day, while Queen Eanfled, Alchfrid, and all whom they could influence, were fasting and celebrating Palm

² Letter of S. Cumman to Segienus, Abbot of Iona, published by Usher, *Sylog. Epp.* No. xi. p. 19. Ap. Moran, *Essays*, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.* Moran, p. 156. Bede, l. ii. c. xix. p. 104.

⁴ Usher, *Sylog. Epp.* No. ix. Ap. Moran, p. 158.

⁵ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xv. p. 262; c. xxi. p. 287.

Sunday; and a week later they also made their Easter feast, so that, in fact, Easter was kept twice in each year.

At length, feeling running high and tender consciences being troubled on the subject, Oswy summoned a council to meet at Whitby, A.D. 664, to inquire into the question and promote unity. On the side of the Irish custom were S. Hilda, who presided on the occasion, S. Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons, S. Colman, the third Bishop of Lindisfarne, with all the clergy and monks of Lindisfarne and Whitby, and the churches and monasteries dependent on them. On the Roman side were Bishop Agilbert, S. Paulinus's old deacon James, Wilfrid, and two other priests, called Romanus and Agatho. But as Agilbert could not speak English fluently, and had to employ an interpreter, Wilfrid was the chief advocate of the Roman custom.

The discussion was a long one, Colman supporting his own practice as that of S. John the Evangelist, Pope Anatolius, and his own father S. Columba; and Wilfrid proving that it was neither that of S. John, nor of Anatolius, nor of any Church, whether of the East or West, nor even of the Jews, but only an error confined to a small number of persons in these remote islands; while Cedd acted as a most careful arbiter between the two parties.

At length Wilfrid allowed that S. Columba and other holy men, who in ignorance had kept Easter wrongly, were beloved by God because they truly loved Him;

but he added, "But as for you and your companions, you certainly sin, if, having heard the decrees of the Apostolic See and of the universal Church, and that the same is confirmed by Holy Writ, you refuse to follow them. . . . And if that Columba of yours (and I may say, of ours, if he was Christ's servant,) was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet could he be preferred before the most holy Prince of the Apostles, to whom our Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven'?"

On hearing this, Oswy said, "Is it true, Colman, that our Lord spoke these words to Peter?" Colman answered, "It is true, O King." Oswy asked again, "Can you show any such power given to your Columba?" And Colman answered, "No." Whereupon Oswy added, "Then I say unto you, that since Peter is the doorkeeper, I will not contradict him, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees; lest when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys." To this all present, except Colman, agreed; and thus Catholic unity was established throughout England⁶.

But Colman⁷, being unwilling to give up his own opinion, resigned his bishopric, and went back to Iona with some of the Irish monks of Lindisfarne and thirty

⁶ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. iv. c. iv. p. 179.

⁷ *Acta SS.* 18 Feb. S. Colman, iii. 20.

English ones. Afterwards he went with them to Ireland, where he built a monastery in an island on the west coast, called Inisbofind, or Island of the White Heifer. But the English and Irish monks quarrelling, because the latter, instead of taking their due share of labor at harvest-time, went about visiting their friends, he built on the mainland, at Mageo, or Mayo, in the diocese of Tuam, another monastery for the English, which was soon filled by a very large and well-ordered community.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLISH BISHOPS AND ABBOTS (*continued*).

WHEN S. Colman resigned the see of Lindisfarne, Tuda, an Irish monk who observed the Catholic Easter, was appointed bishop in his stead. But after a few months he died of the pestilence which was committing fearful ravages in both England and Ireland. Then all agreed that there was no one so well fitted as Wilfrid to succeed him. But he made great difficulties about accepting the see, because it was not possible for him to be properly consecrated in England. For the pestilence had carried off not only Tuda, but also Deusdedit, Archbishop of Canterbury, and S. Cedd and S. Jaruman, Bishop of the Mercians, and Damian, Bishop of Rochester¹, so that Wini, Bishop of the West Saxons, was the only bishop in England whose ordination was valid. At last Wilfrid accepted the see, on the condition that he should be allowed to go to France for consecration. He accordingly went to Agilbert, now Bishop of Paris, who consecrated him at Compiègne in the presence of eleven other Catholic bishops.

¹ Bede, l. iv. c. ii. p. 173.

But during his absence, which was longer than had been anticipated, those who were attached to the Irish customs persuaded Oswy, that as it was quite uncertain when Wilfrid might return, it would be well to consecrate to the vacant see Chad, the youngest of the three saintly brothers of S. Cedd, to whom S. Cedd had bequeathed the charge of his Abbey of Lestingau, or Lastingham, near Cleveland, in Yorkshire. Oswy yielded to their arguments, and Chad, being a simple man and unacquainted with ecclesiastical law, made no difficulty about being consecrated by Wini in the presence of two British bishops.

S. Chad² placed his chair at York instead of Lindisfarne. He at once entered on his episcopal duties with great zeal, travelling about on foot to preach in all the towns, the open country, the cottages, villages, and castles. He was well versed in the Holy Scriptures, which he had studied for some years in Ireland, where he had been the companion of S. Egbert. He was also remarkable for his humility, his love of poverty, and his habit of seeing God's hand in every event. Thus, if a fine fresh wind began to blow, he would pause in his reading, and thanking God for it, would pray Him to extend the blessing to all mankind. If the wind blew stronger, he would close his book, and, prostrate on the ground, would pray more earnestly. But if it were a thunderstorm, he would go to the church, and pray and sing psalms till the weather became calm. When his disciples asked him why he

² Bede, l. iii. c. xxviii. p. 165.

did so, he answered, "Have you not read, 'The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High gave forth His voice. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings and discomfited them'? For the Lord moves the air, raises the wind, darts lightning, and thunders from heaven, to excite the inhabitants of the earth to fear Him, and to remind them of the future judgment. Wherefore, as often as He lifts His hand, as it were to strike, it behoves us to answer His admonitions with fear and love, to implore His mercy, and to search and cleanse our hearts, so as never to be struck by Him."

Meanwhile Wilfrid, returning from France and finding his diocese occupied, pointed out the irregularity that had been committed, and then humbly and calmly retired to his Abbey of Ripon. But he was not long permitted to remain in obscurity. S. Sexberga, who then governed Kent during the minority of her son Egbert, invited him to take charge of the vacant archiepiscopal see; and Wulfhere wished to make him Bishop of the Mercians. Though he declined these offers, yet he took advantage of this great opportunity for advancing the Church's work. He went into Kent, where he ordained many priests and deacons, and exercised the episcopal functions for some time in such a way as to win the love and veneration of the whole kingdom. He also visited Wulfhere, and induced him to build many churches and monasteries, of which there were as yet but few in Mercia; and it was probably at this time that he built his own monastery

at Oundle, in Northamptonshire, to which he came forty years later to die. All the monasteries were placed under the Benedictine rule, and throughout the kingdom of Mercia all was done according to the true Catholic discipline; for Wilfrid's influence was unbounded with Wulfhere, who did nothing except by his advice.

Besides this great work of maintaining ecclesiastical discipline in Kent, and planting it in the recently converted kingdom of Mercia, it was no doubt through Wilfrid's influence that Oswy and Egbert agreed, A.D. 667, to send Wighard to Rome to be consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. Unhappily, Wighard and almost all his companions died in Rome of a pestilence, that happened then to be raging. The Pope Vitalian ordered Hadrian, an African by birth, and Abbot of the Niridian monastery near Naples, to accept the archbishopric. Hadrian answered that he was unworthy of so high a dignity, but he knew one whose learning and age well fitted him for the office. He therefore presented to the Pope, Theodore, a monk of Tarsus, sixty-five years of age, who was a very learned and holy man. The Pope consented to his appointment, but only on condition that Hadrian would accompany him to England; for he feared lest Theodore, being a Greek, should introduce into the English Church any thing contrary to the true faith.

Theodore's consecration was deferred for four months, till his hair, which had been shorn in the Greek way, should be grown sufficiently for him to receive S.

Peter's tonsure. He was then consecrated on Sunday, the 26th of March, A.D. 668; and two months later he and Hadrian set out for England, under the escort of Benedict Biscop, whom the Pope called on to quit the pilgrim's life, and act in Christ's service as their guide and interpreter.

In May, A.D. 669, Theodore and Benedict Biscop arrived at Canterbury; but Hadrian, having been detained a prisoner by Ebroin, the Neustrian Mayor of the Palace, did not rejoin them till some time later. Theodore's first care was to inquire into Chad's consecration, which he declared to be invalid. On hearing his decision Chad meekly answered, "If you know that I have not duly received episcopal ordination, I willingly resign the office, for I never thought myself worthy of it; but, though unworthy, in obedience I submitted to undertake it." Chad accordingly resigned the bishopric of York to Wilfrid, and retired to his monastery at Lestingau.

As to Wilfrid, Theodore approved of all that he had done, whether in Kent or elsewhere. There was but one thing of which he disapproved; which was, that Wilfrid always went about on foot. He therefore commanded him to go on horseback whenever he had a long journey to make. But Wilfrid hesitated to obey, for he was a true monk, and loved the way of poverty and hardship. Whereupon Theodore, deeming him a holy man, lifted him with his own hands on horseback, and thus compelled him to ride whenever it was necessary.

As soon as Wilfrid had got possession of his diocese, his first care was to restore the old stone church of S. Peter at York, which S. Paulinus had begun and S. Oswald had finished. The foundations had sunk, the walls and roof were cracked, moss and green mould covered the pillars, birds' nests hung within the building, and the altar vessels, books, and vestments were mean and worn out. He therefore sent to Kent and Gaul for skilful workmen, and they repaired the walls, leaded the roof, scraped the pillars, and glazed the windows, which had hitherto had only wooden lattices and curtains, for till then glass was unknown in England. He also procured handsome vestments and altar vessels, and a copy of the Gospels written in gold on a purple ground, and several copies of the Bible set with gold and jewels. When York minster was finished Wilfrid sent the workmen to Ripon, where they built a new stone church with beautiful pillars and porches, the wonder of Yorkshire for its extraordinary magnificence. When it was completed it was dedicated to S. Peter, and the festival of consecration was attended by great crowds of all classes, from the two kings, Egfrid and Elfwyn, down to the very poor and lowly, all of whom were entertained sumptuously for three days by Wilfrid and his monks.

Wilfrid next turned to the north of his large diocese. There, in the valley of the Tyne, near the spot where the town of Hexham now stands, and close to the Heavenfield and S. Oswald's cross, he built a church and abbey of wrought stone, dedicated to S. Andrew,

which all declared to be the finest building on this side the Alps.

Besides this church-building work, Wilfrid paid great attention to the mode of celebrating divine worship. He sent to Canterbury for the precentor, Eddi Stephani, who trained the choirs and people to the Gregorian chants, which till now had been used in Northumbria only by S. Paulinus's holy deacon, James, in his church at Catterick.

He was constantly moving about his diocese, visiting the monasteries and churches, and seeing that the rule of S. Benedict and the Roman customs were every where observed. So great was his reputation for sanctity, and so much was he beloved, that many abbots and abbesses placed their abbeys under his protection, while others made him their heir³. Such was the religious spirit that he inspired, that he had several thousand monks⁴ under his rule; and many of the sons of nobles, who were sent to be educated in his monasteries, afterwards became monks.

Wilfrid also went about preaching and giving Confirmation to his flock. The people pressed so eagerly to receive this sacrament, that on one occasion at Tiddafrey a boy was crushed to death. The distracted mother took him in her arms, and covering his face, forced her way through the crowd and presented him to Wilfrid, as if for confirmation. When the bishop uncovered the face and saw that the child was dead, he was greatly amazed and troubled. But the mother

³ Eddius, c. xxi, p. 62.

⁴ Ibid. c. xxiv. p. 64.

said, with frequent sobs, "My lord, I had resolved to carry my boy to you to be confirmed in Christ, and now I bring him to be raised to life. You preach Christ the Almighty. Prove your preaching by your works, and raise my only begotten from death. Surely it is no great thing that I ask of His Omnipotence." Then she burst into a passionate agony of grief, and the crowd joined their lamentations to hers. Wilfrid also wept, and kneeling down he prayed aloud. "O Father, look, I beseech Thee, not at my merits, but at Thine own merciful doings, and console this woman in her grief, and give her back her child, through Jesus Christ Thine only-begotten Son." Then rising, he laid his hand on the child and it began to stir, and soon stood up in perfect health. Wilfrid gave him to his mother for seven years, at the end of which time she returned him to God, and he became a monk at Ripon.

This was not the only great favor that was granted to Wilfrid's prayers. While Hexham Abbey was being built, one of the skilled workmen from Canterbury fell from a scaffolding, and his bones were so smashed that all the bystanders considered him to be the same as dead. Wilfrid happened not to be present, but knowing by divine inspiration what had occurred, he began to lament, and desired those around him to pray for the soul at the point of death. He himself hastened to the dying man; but no sooner did he lay his hand on him than his ebbing life revived, and his limbs became quite whole and sound.

While Wilfrid was doing so much in Northumbria, the work which he had begun in Mercia was carried on by Chad. The spirit of humility with which he had resigned his bishopric to Wilfrid, proved him to be so worthy of the episcopal dignity, that before very long Theodore placed him in the bishopric of the Mercians, which had been vacant ever since the death of S. Jaruman⁵. Wulfhere gave him a piece of land at Burton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire, where he built a monastery and a church dedicated to S. Peter, to which his bones were afterwards removed. A very ancient Saxon church dedicated to S. Peter is still to be seen at Burton.

Chad took up his residence at Lichfield, and built himself a small house near the church, where he was wont to pray and read with seven or eight of the monks belonging to his church; for in accordance with the directions of S. Gregory to S. Augustine, all these English bishops, being monks, continued their former monastic life, and had monasteries attached to their cathedrals. Chad was waited on in this small house by Owini, an East Anglian noble, who had come into Northumbria with Queen Etheldreda, and had been at the head of her household, but had forsaken the world to obtain the heavenly reward. He was a man of great virtue and simplicity; and when he renounced the world he presented himself at the monastery of Lestingau, clad in a coarse garment, with a pickaxe and hatchet in his hand, to show that he did not come to live in idle-

⁵ Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. iv. c. iii. p. 174.

ness but to labor. He followed Chad to Lichfield, and while the others read and prayed he occupied himself with servile work.

One day when Owini was thus employed out of doors, while Chad was alone in the oratory of the house and the others were gone to the church, he heard the voices of persons singing most sweetly and joyfully, as if descending from heaven. He listened attentively to their singing, and after about half-an-hour he heard the song of joy ascend from the roof of the oratory and return to heaven. While he stood astonished and wondering what it could be, S. Chad opened the window of the oratory, and said to him, "Make haste to the church, and tell the seven brothers to come here, and do you come with them." When they were all come, he exhorted them solemnly to keep peace among themselves and with others, to maintain monastic discipline, and to observe faithfully what he and his predecessors had taught them: adding, "The day of my death is at hand, for that well-beloved guest, who is wont to visit the brethren, has vouchsafed to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return then to the church, and tell the brethren to pray for my passage, and to prepare for their own, the hour of which is uncertain, by watching, prayers, and good works."

When the rest had gone away in sorrow, Owini, prostrating himself on the ground, said, "I beseech you, father, may I be allowed to ask a question?" Chad answered, "Ask what you will." Then Owini

said, "I entreat you to tell me what was that song of joy, which I heard coming down upon this oratory, and after some time returning to heaven?" Chad replied, "If you heard the singing, and know of the coming of the heavenly company, I command you in the name of our Lord, not to tell it to any one before my death. They were angelic spirits who came to call me to my heavenly reward, which I have always longed after; and they have promised to return in seven days, and take me away with them."

He soon after fell ill, and at the end of seven days he expired, on the 2nd of March, A.D. 672. He was buried in the Church of S. Mary, at Lichfield; but when the Church of S. Peter was finished, he was removed thither; and finally, A.D. 1148, his relics were translated to the present cathedral of Lichfield, where they now rest. The devotion to him still lingers in Warwickshire, and he is the patron of the diocese and cathedral of Birmingham.

In the year that S. Chad died, Benedict Biscop returned to Northumbria. After escorting Theodore to England, he had taken charge of S. Augustine's Abbey for two years, while Hadrian was detained prisoner in France. During this time he discovered what was the work for which God had prepared him during his long years of pilgrimage. As soon as he was set free from the charge of the abbey, he set out again for Rome, not, as on his three former visits⁶, to

⁶ Bede calls this his third visit to Rome, and the two following ones the fourth and fifth, probably because these were the third, fourth, and

indulge his devotion, but to collect all that he wanted for the work that lay before him. He therefore made only a short stay there, and, as soon as he could, hurried back to England, where he arrived A.D. 672.

About twenty years had elapsed since he had quitted Northumbria, and all was changed. His old master Oswy was dead; so also was his friend Alchfrid, who had shared his love and veneration for the Roman Church; and the whole kingdom was now ruled by Egfrid, Oswy's younger son. Benedict therefore thought of going to Cenwealh, the King of the West Saxons, with whom he had formerly been on terms of friendship. But death again met him, and the premature removal of Cenwealh left him no resource except to address himself to Egfrid.

Egfrid received him more graciously than he had expected. When he told that prince all that had befallen him since he had left his home in his youth, what had been his religious aspirations, and what monastic institutions he had beheld in Rome and its neighborhood, and showed him the precious books and relics of the apostles and martyrs that he had brought thence, Egfrid was so delighted, and entered so fully into his views, that he gave him the land of seventy families at the mouth of the river Wear, and bade him build on it a monastery in honor of S. Peter.

fifth times that he left England; but as Bede narrates (Vit. c. ii.) two visits to Rome during his second absence from England, this was in fact his fourth, and the two subsequent ones were his fifth and sixth visits to Rome. *Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 963.*

The abbey which Benedict now built was long very celebrated, and its memory still lives in the name of the town, Monks-Wearmouth, which occupies its site. As there were no workmen in England sufficiently skilled to carry out his orders, he sent to France for masons and other artificers, who, under his directions, erected a stone church of beautiful workmanship in the Roman style, which he so loved. Such was the devotion to S. Peter which animated all engaged in the work, that in a year from the laying of the foundations High Mass was celebrated in it. When the building was thus far completed, Benedict sent to France for glass-workers, who not only glazed the windows, but also taught the English to manufacture glass for windows, for cups, and other domestic and ornamental purposes. He also sent to various places beyond the sea, to buy vestments and sacred vessels, and all else necessary for Divine worship, which he could not obtain at home.

But not content with what he could thus procure, he himself made a fifth visit to Rome. On his return he brought back from Pope S. Agatho a bull conferring on his monastery all the privileges and immunities granted to other monasteries of the Benedictine order. He also brought innumerable books of every kind, a great many relics of Apostles and martyrs to supply other English churches, and a great number of pictures for his Church of S. Peter. In the middle of the apse of the church was placed the picture of S. Mary, Ever-Virgin and Mother of God, and on each side of it from

wall to wall, those of the twelve Apostles. The south wall was covered with pictures from our Lord's life, and the north wall with representations of the Apocalyptic visions, so that the most ignorant persons might, by looking at them, be led to meditate on the love of our Lord and His saints, to give thanks for His Incarnation, and to examine their consciences and reform their lives through dread of the Last Judgment.

But besides all these things, Benedict had brought with him John the Arch-chanter of S. Peter's and Abbot of S. Martin's, who taught the monks of Wearmouth the way of singing and reading aloud, as was done at S. Peter's in Rome, and wrote out for them the proper chants for the full service throughout the year. Almost all the other monasteries in Northumbria sent those of their monks who were the best singers, to be taught by John, and many invited him to come and teach in their monasteries. The music scores which he wrote for Wearmouth were long preserved and used in the monastery, and were also copied for other places. When the church and monastery of S. Peter at Wearmouth were completed, and all was duly ordered in the Roman way and according to the Benedictine rule, they were the wonder and admiration of the North of England.

Abbot John had been ordered by the Pope to inquire into the faith of the English Church, which he accordingly did. He left with Benedict a copy of the canons of a council held at Rome not long before by Pope Martin against Monothelitism; and he also attended

a synod held by Theodore at Heathfield, or Hatfield, in which all the English bishops declared their unanimous agreement in the Catholic faith. John died on his way back to Rome ; but his written testimony to the purity of the doctrine of the English Church was carried to Pope S. Agatho, who received it joyfully, and gave it his approval.

CHAPTER IX.

ENGLISH BISHOPS AND ABBOTS (*continued*).

WHILE the Church's work was advancing so prosperously, great changes had taken place in Northumbria, and disasters were impending. Oswy died A.D. 670, while he was preparing to make a pilgrimage to Rome with Wilfrid, and his eldest son, Alchfrid, having died before him¹, his kingdom fell to his favorite son, Egfrid. He left two other sons, Elfwin, who was only nine years old, and Aldfrid², who was illegitimate, and being

¹ As Alchfrid is not mentioned after he and Oswy sent S. Wilfrid to France to be consecrated, it must be concluded that he died before his father.

² William of Malmesbury (*De Regib.* l. i.) confuses Alchfrid with Aldfrid, and treating both as one person, says, that being illegitimate and devoted to study, a party of the nobles deemed him unworthy of the throne, and drove him into exile, whence they recalled him in the hour of need. But both Bede and Eddi distinguish between them, Alchfrid, Aluchfrid, or Alhfrid being the friend of S. Wilfrid and devoted to Roman customs (*Bede, Vit. S. Cuthbert*, c. vii., and *Eccles. Hist.*; also *Eddius*, cc. vii.—ix.); while it was Aldfrid or Alfridus who succeeded Egfrid, and was such an enemy to S. Wilfrid, and regardless of the Pope's authority. *Eddius*, c. xliii. et seqq. *Bede, Vit. S. Cuthbert*, c. xxiv., and *Eccles. Hist.* l. iv. c. xxvi. See also *Vit. S. Cuthburg, Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. l. i. p. 424.*

devoted to the pursuit of learning, had long lived in Ireland.

Oswy's death made for some years no difference to the Church, for Wilfrid was high in Egfrid's favor. But after Wilfrid had declared the marriage with S. Etheldreda null and void, Egfrid's affection for him cooled; and the breach was widened, when Egfrid soon after married Ermenburga, a proud, worldly woman, who was envious of Wilfrid's high position. She was always pointing out, that his diocese equalled the kingdom in extent; that his lands were as broad and fair as the royal domains; that his abbeys eclipsed the king's palaces in grandeur; and that his influence with all classes, and even with the king's enemies, was unbounded. Thus working on the sore feeling that already existed in Egfrid's mind, she first induced him to resume some of the property bestowed by his predecessors on the Church. Then taking advantage of Theodore's intention, as declared at his first synod of Hertford, A.D. 673, to subdivide the large English dioceses at some future time, she persuaded Egfrid to accuse Wilfrid to the archbishop, who, believing charges which fell in with his own wishes, exceeded the limits of his lawful power, and without Wilfrid's knowledge or consent³, arbitrarily and hastily divided the Northumbrian diocese into two or three bishoprics, A.D. 678, placing Eata in Hexham, Bosa in York, and according to some⁴, reserving Lindisfarne for Wilfrid,

³ Eddius, c. xxiv. Gale, p. 63.

⁴ Anglia Sacra, i. 693. There had been no Bishop of Lindisfarne since

but according to others⁵, giving both Lindisfarne and Hexham to Eata, and leaving Wilfrid only his abbey of Ripon.

It is always difficult to explain the differences which have arisen between saints, but in the present case it is impossible; because, in consequence of the dearth of historical records, only a few broad facts are known. On the one hand, it is evident that Wilfrid's diocese, extending from the Humber to the north of the Frith of Forth and the Clyde, was too large; and Theodore being aware of this, the more readily acceded to Egfrid's wishes. On the other hand, Wilfrid resisted this exercise of authority, because⁶, according to canonical law, if an increase in the episcopate were necessary, the new bishops ought to have been chosen by the clergy of their respective churches, subject to the approval of the archbishop and synod of bishops. Thus, Wilfrid was the champion of the liberty of the Church, against both the king's tyranny and the archbishop's uncanonical jurisdiction. It ought also to be remarked, that Egfrid took advantage of this subdivision of the diocese to seize some of the Church lands, which were not restored when Wilfrid was reinstated in the see⁷; and also, that all the bishops appointed both now and afterwards during Wilfrid's absence, had been educated in Irish monas-

Tuda's death, as both S. Chad and S. Wilfrid had placed their chair at York.

⁵ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xix. p. 271. Eddius, c. xxiv. Gale, p. 63.

⁶ Eddius, c. xxix. Gale, p. 66.

⁷ Eddius, c. xliv. Gale, p. 75.

teries, and though several of them were saints, they had not had the opportunity of learning Roman ecclesiastical discipline. These two secondary facts show how Wilfrid's cause was identified with the Church's welfare, and throw some light on the continued enmity of Egfrid and his successor Aldfrid.

As soon as Wilfrid knew what Theodore and Egfrid had done, he went to the court, and humbly asked the reason of it. Egfrid replied, "We do not accuse you of any crime, but notwithstanding, we intend to carry the decree into execution." Then Wilfrid, finding that argument was vain, answered, "I see that your Majesty has been wrought upon to my prejudice by factious and malignant persons. I therefore appeal to Rome." The courtiers laughed and sneered at the mention of Rome. But Wilfrid replied, "Unhappy men, you laugh now to see the churches ruined; but on this day year you will bewail your own ruin." When in the following year, on that same day, the young King Elfwin, who was beloved by the whole nation, was killed in a battle with the Mercians, and many of his people also fell, all remembered Wilfrid's words.

Wilfrid sailed for France on his way to Rome; but a strong west wind drove him on the coast of Friesland. The Frisians were Pagans, and had never heard the Gospel; but Aldgisl, their king, received Wilfrid with true barbaric hospitality. In return, Wilfrid preached to the Frisians, many thousands of whom were baptized.

He also taught them to cultivate their land, which was very barren and unfruitful.

Happy was it for Wilfrid that he had been driven on this hospitable coast; for Ebroin, the Mayor of the Palace, having been bribed by Ermenburga, had made arrangements to seize and kill him if he should land in France. Winfred, Bishop of the Mercians, fell into the snare prepared for Wilfrid; for happening to go at this time to France, the similarity of their names led to his being seized and plundered, hardly escaping with his life.

On discovering the mistake, Ebroin wrote to Aldgisl, offering him a bushel of gold if he would send him Wilfrid, alive or dead. It was winter when Ebroin's letter arrived. Aldgisl was giving a great feast to his people: Wilfrid, Eddi Stephani, and his monks were among the guests: the food and the ale went freely round, and a huge fire of logs blazed on the hearth. Aldgisl ordered Ebroin's messenger to be brought in, and the letter to be read. As its contents were heard, every eye was turned on Wilfrid, but he was calm and unmoved, for his trust was in God. When the letter was finished, Aldgisl took it in his hand, and indignantly tearing it and throwing it on the blazing hearth, he said to the messenger, "In such manner may the Creator of all things rend and destroy the power and life of the perjurer and traitor, and consume him to ashes. Go tell your lord that I spake thus."

Wilfrid remained with his generous Pagan host till the spring, when, happily escaping the snares laid for

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him by Ebroin in Neustria, he passed into Austrasia, where reigned an old friend of his, Dagobert II. For in one of the revolutions brought about by the Mayors of the Palace, Dagobert had been forcibly tonsured and sent into Ireland; and when a counter-revolution called him to the throne of Austrasia, it was Wilfrid who had sent for him from Ireland, and supplied him with the means to return to France. Dagobert was now rejoiced to return this kindness. He offered Wilfrid the bishopric of Strasburg, which Wilfrid declining, he sent him on his journey under the escort of Deodatus, one of the Austrasian bishops, who was going to Rome to attend a council.

In Lombardy Wilfrid was at first received very coolly by Bertari, the duke. For Ermenburga's emissaries had been there, and had offered the duke great gifts if he would seize the English bishop, who was flying clandestinely to Rome. But when Bertari found out the true state of the case, he told Wilfrid about these offers, adding, "But I refused so wicked a proposal; telling them, that in the days of my youth I was an exile in the court of the King of the Huns, who made a covenant with me in the name of his false gods, that he would never betray me to my enemies. After a time my enemies sent to the Pagan King, offering him a bushel of gold if he would allow them to slay me; but he refused, saying, 'Doubtless, my gods would cut off my life if I did this wickedness, seeing I have made a covenant by my gods.' How much more then should I, who know the true God, refrain

from losing my soul for the gain of even the whole world?"

Passing safely through so many perils, Wilfrid at length arrived in Rome A.D. 679. Pope S. Agatho was about to hold a council to condemn Monothelitism; and as Theodore had a great reputation for learning, he had just sent him an invitation to the council by Benedict Biscop and John the Arch-chanter of S. Peter's. Cenwealh, one of Theodore's monks, had also arrived in Rome with letters from the Archbishop and S. Hilda, making serious accusations against Wilfrid; and thus the case was exciting general interest.

The Pope collected above fifty bishops and priests at the Church of S. Salvator, to judge the cause. When it had been fully examined, the Pope expressed his satisfaction, that Wilfrid, though unjustly cast out of his see, had not obstinately resisted by force, but had humbly begged the assistance of S. Peter. Then the synod unanimously decreed, "That the holy bishop, Wilfrid, be restored to the bishopric which he lately possessed; and that the archbishop ordain for his coadjutors such persons as himself shall, with the consent of a synod to be assembled there, make choice of; and as for the persons, who, in his absence have illegally intruded into his bishopric, let them be utterly expelled from thence⁸."

His cause being thus honorably concluded, Wilfrid remained over the winter in Rome. He attended

⁸ Eddius, c. xxxi. Gale, p. 67. Spelman, Concil. i. 158. Ap. English Saints, S. Wilfrid, p. 110.

the council which the Pope held the following year, and being called on to declare his own faith and that of the provinces whence he came, his declaration was recorded among the acts of the council, as follows: "Wilfrid, the beloved of God, Bishop of the city of York, having appealed to the Apostolic See, and being by that authority acquitted of every thing, whether specified against him or not, and having taken his seat in judgment with a hundred and twenty-five bishops in the synod, made confession of the true and Catholic faith, and subscribed the same in the name of the northern parts of Britain and Ireland, inhabited by the English and Britons, as also by the Scots and Picts⁹.

On his return from Rome Wilfrid had a very narrow escape of his life. His friend Dagobert having been murdered, Austrasia was in the hands of Ebroin, one of whose minions, Vaimer, on whom episcopal orders had been forced, waylaid and captured him. But Wilfrid conducted himself so calmly and bravely, that Vaimer was touched, confessed himself a sinner, begged the saint's blessing, and allowed him and his companions to pass uninjured.

On arriving in England Wilfrid asked an audience of Egfrid, and after some difficulty and delay he was admitted to the royal presence. He presented the Pope's sealed letters, which Egfrid ordered to be read aloud. But when he heard their contents, not daring to reject the Apostolic authority, yet resolved not to obey, he threw them aside contemptuously as forgeries,

⁹ Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. v. c. xix. p. 272.

and accused Wilfrid of falsehood and corruption. The courtiers heaped insults on the holy bishop; Ermenburga tore his scapular of relics from his neck; and after being violently thrust out of the king's presence, he was committed to the charge of Offrith, a cruel and savage man, who cast him into a dungeon which no ray of daylight ever entered.

In no way perturbed, Wilfrid chanted psalms day and night in his dungeon, and his guards looking in, beheld it illumined with such celestial splendor that they fled in terror. Offrith's wife was taken ill, and being at the point of death, he rushed to the dungeon, threw himself at the feet of his prisoner, and besought him to come to her aid. Wilfrid praying fervently, sprinkled her with holy water, and she was instantly cured. Then Offrith told Egfrid all that had occurred, and refused to act any longer as Wilfrid's gaoler.

Wilfrid was accordingly removed to Dunbar, and placed in the custody of Tydlin, who ordered him to be thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with heavy chains. But no chains could be made to fit him, for they were too large and slipped off, or they were too small and would not go on, or if they were fastened on his limbs, in a moment they snapped asunder, "as if the feet that bore about the Gospel, and the hands that baptized, could not be bound¹."

Egfrid and Ermenburga now went on a visit to S. Ebba at Coldingham. While they were there, Ermenburga was seized with a frightful malady; her limbs

¹ Eddius, c. xxxvii. Gale, p. 71.

were contracted, and she shrieked and raved horribly, as if possessed by a devil. Then S. Ebba² reminded Egfrid of the sin he had committed in contemning S. Peter's authority; and she told him that the cause of the queen's illness was nought else than S. Wilfrid's reliquary, which she had torn from his neck and placed on her own. At her intercession Wilfrid was brought from his dungeon, when, returning good for evil, he prayed for Ermenburga and cured her. But neither she nor Egfrid had humility or generosity enough to be reconciled to him; and the most they could be induced to do, was to give him his liberty, restore him his reliquary, and order him to quit the kingdom.

Penniless and an exile, Wilfrid departed with a few faithful followers. He threw himself on the hospitality of Beorthwald, a Mercian noble, who received him honorably, and gave him the means to build a small monastery. But Ethelred, who had succeeded Wulfhere and had married Egfrid's sister, Ostritha, no sooner heard that Wilfrid was with Beorthwald, than, fearing Egfrid's anger, he ordered him to leave his kingdom. Wilfrid then went to the West Saxons. But the wife of Centwine, their king, was sister to Ermenburga, and she persuaded her husband to forbid him to remain. Thus repulsed on all sides, Wilfrid's only refuge was with the South Saxons. Nor could he have gone to a

² Eddius, c. xxxviii. Gale, p. 71. Both Eadmer and Fridegod say that it was Egfrid's mother who thus spoke to him; but the mistake has arisen from their misunderstanding the passage in Eddius, where the title of mother is given to S. Ebba, as is often done with abbesses.

better place ; for here there was a great work to be done for God. It has been told elsewhere how he converted the South Saxons ; how he acted for five years as their bishop ; and how, after they were conquered by Ceadwalla, King of the West Saxons, he gained that prince's favor, and the fruits of his influence appeared in Ceadwalla's conversion, abdication of the throne, and pilgrimage to Rome.

During Wilfrid's absence the Church in Northumbria was governed by the bishops between whom Theodore had divided his diocese. At first there were only two bishops, Eata being Bishop of Lindisfarne, and Bosa of York ; but after a time three more were added, Eadhed being made Bishop of Sidnachester, in the province of Lindsey, a part of Lincolnshire, which Egfrid had conquered from Wulfhere ; Tumbert being consecrated Bishop of Hexham, and Trumwine, of the Picts, the southern part of whose territory was subject to Northumbria³. In the absence of full historical evidence, it is impossible to explain how, after the decree of the Roman synod and the Pope's letters, Theodore and the above bishops, and others whom Theodore afterwards consecrated as their successors, should have thus intruded on Wilfrid's diocese in opposition to the canons of the Church. But as none of the contemporary records impute any blame to them for this apparently schismatical proceeding, and, on the contrary, Pope John, in his letter to Ethelred and Aldfrid on the occasion of Wilfrid's second appeal to

³ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. iv. c. xii. p. 192.

Rome, said⁴, that "Theodore had not opposed Pope Agatho's sentence, but rather had obeyed the Pontifical decrees," it must be concluded that he obtained from Rome some authorization, which has not been handed down. As the continuance of Christianity in this recently converted province depended on the presence of bishops, there would doubtless have been no difficulty, under the peculiar circumstances, in obtaining leave to provide for the spiritual wants of the people, so long as Wilfrid should be banished by the king.

In the year 684 Tumbert was deposed from the see of Hexham, for what reason is not told; and Cuthbert was elected to succeed him. But Eata, thinking that Cuthbert would prefer Lindisfarne, resigned that see to him, and went himself to Hexham.

This was the last unfulfilled part of Boisil's prophecy, of which Cuthbert had long lived in dread. He could not be persuaded to leave his hermitage, till Egfrid, Trumwine, and many of the monks of Lindisfarne, came to his island, and kneeling to him, conjured him to go with them to the synod at Twyford-on-the-Alne, which had been convened to elect a bishop. Weeping, he at length accompanied them, and on his arrival at the synod, being overcome by the unanimous wish of all present, and still more by his old master's prediction, he most re-

⁴ Eddius, c. lii. Gale, p. 81. "Nec hoc venerandæ memoriæ Theodorus Præsul, qui ab hac Apostolica Sede directus erat, contravenisse recognoscimur . . . magis autem (ut ex ejus dictis apparuit) et decretis Pontificalibus obsecutus erat."

luctantly accepted the episcopal dignity. He was consecrated at York, the following Easter, A.D. 685, by Theodore in Egfrid's presence.

Cuthbert's consecration was the last public ceremony at which Egfrid assisted. The year before, being provoked by some aggression on the part of the Scots and Picts, he had sent an army into Ireland under Beort, one of his generals, who miserably wasted that "innocent nation, who had always been friendly to the English," sparing neither age nor sex, nor even the churches and monasteries. So great was the desolation, that from end to end of the land there rang a wild curse on the impious foe, and a cry to God for vengeance⁵.

Egfrid made preparations to march against the Picts immediately after Easter. But a strange misgiving, such as precedes misfortune, agitated all his people. That awful Irish curse ever rang in their ears. They thought, too, of Wilfrid, and it was commonly observed that when he was with them, Egfrid had gained victories over both Mercians and Picts with an inferior force; whereas, since Wilfrid was no longer there to pray for them, a very large army had been defeated with great slaughter by the Mercians in the battle at the Trent, where the young King Elfwyn was slain.

Elfreda and her nuns, too, had gloomy forebodings; for they knew that S. Peter's authority was set at nought, and his blessing was not on the land. She sent for Cuthbert, who had not yet left his cell, to come and speak to her about important matters. They

⁵ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. iv. c. xxvi. p. 223.

met in Coquet Island; and as he was talking to her about various things, on which she had asked his advice, she suddenly interrupted him, and throwing herself at his feet, exclaimed, "I adjure thee, by the awful and venerable name of the King of Heaven and of angels, to tell me how long my brother Egfrid will live and govern the Angles. For I know that thou hast the gift of prophecy, and can tell me if thou wilt." Then Cuthbert, awed by her adjuration, yet not wishing to speak openly, said, "I wonder that thou, a wise woman and learned in the Scriptures, should ask for a long period of human life, since the Psalmist has said, 'Our years shall be considered as a spider⁶.' Solomon also warns us, 'If a man live many years, and have rejoiced in them all, he must remember the darksome time and the evil days: which when they shall come, the things passed shall be accused of vanity⁷.' How much more those for whom only one year of life remains, and for whom death now waits at the door." On hearing these dark words, Elfleda wept bitterly. But after some time, drying her tears, she said with feminine audacity, "I adjure thee, by the High Majesty of the Supreme God, to tell me who will be the king's heir, since he has neither sons nor brothers." After a short silence Cuthbert answered, "Say not so; for he will have a successor, for whom thou mayest have the same sisterly love as for Egfrid." Then she said, "I beseech thee tell me where he is." And he replied, "Behold how this vast sea abounds

⁶ Ps. lxxxix. 9.⁷ Eccles. xi. 8.

with islands. It is easy for God to provide from one of them a king for the Angles." Whereupon she knew that he spoke of Aldfrid, who was said to be a son of her father's, and who lived an exile in the Irish islands for the pursuit of learning^s.

Elfheda, and Cuthbert, and many wise and good men, tried to dissuade Egfrid from making war on the Picts. But all in vain; for he was blinded by his passions, and rushed presumptuously to his ruin.

Immediately after Cuthbert's consecration, Egfrid set out for Scotland, leaving Ermenburga with a sister of hers, who was abbess of a monastery in Carlisle. Before long Cuthbert went thither to comfort her, for she, too, was very anxious. Egfrid had recently given Carlisle to him; and the day after his arrival, which was Saturday, the citizens took him round the city to show him its wonderful walls and the fountain which the Romans had made. And as he stood by the fountain he was rapt in spirit, and it was revealed to him that Egfrid was defeated and killed. His troubled mien excited the notice of those around him, but evading their inquiries, he hastened to the queen, and said to her, "To-morrow being Sunday you may not travel; but early on Monday morning set out for York, for possibly the king is dead. I will follow you on Tuesday, when I have consecrated the church of a neighboring monastery."

The next day news came that Egfrid had been led into mountain passes at Drumnechtan in Forfarshire⁹,

^s Vit. S. Cuthbert, c. xxiv. ⁹ Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. iv. c. xxvi. p. 223.

where he and the greater part of his army had perished on the 20th of May, A.D. 685. Then there was great alarm in Bernicia, for the Picts had crossed the border, and Carlisle was not safe. Aldfrid was sent for in haste, and he came from Ireland, and took the kingdom. For a year there was much fighting, and many of the English were killed, while others saved their lives only by flight. Among the latter was Trumwine, Bishop of the Picts, who fled from his monastery of Abercorn, and took refuge at Whitby, where he spent the rest of his life. Aldfrid nobly retrieved these disasters. But in spite of all his efforts the Picts recovered their own lands, which the English and Scots had long held, and many of the Britons regained their liberty; so that he was compelled to be content with a narrower territory.

From this time the strength of the Northumbrian kingdom began to decline, and never again was it so powerful and so glorious as it had been in the days of S. Edwin, S. Oswald, and S. Oswy.

As for Ermenburga, this great sorrow broke her proud spirit. A widow and penitent, she cast off her crown, and returning to Carlisle as soon as it was a safe residence, she received the veil from Cuthbert, and afterwards became a very holy abbess¹.

In the year 686, Cuthbert, knowing that his end was approaching, made the round of his diocese, bidding farewell to his friends, and addressing his parting exhortations to his flock. He then resigned his epis-

¹ English Saints, S. Wilfrid, p. 141. Eddius, c. xxiv. Gale, p. 63.

copal charge, and retired to his island hermitage, in order to be more free to prepare himself for the hour of death. After a painful illness of three weeks, during the greater part of which he was quite alone and destitute of ordinary necessities, he expired on the 20th of March, A.D. 687, while making his thanksgiving after receiving the Viaticum. His relics were regarded as the most precious treasure of the northern counties, and were publicly venerated in Durham Cathedral till the overthrow of the faith in the sixteenth century. Then, in anticipation of sacrilegious spoliation, they were privately removed, and have ever since lain hid, in the hope of brighter times, the place of their concealment being known only to a few Benedictine monks, who hand down the secret from generation to generation.

Soon after S. Cuthbert's death, Eata, Bishop of Hexham, died, and Theodore consecrated in his stead John, Abbot of Deirwood, who had been one of S. Hilda's monks at Whitby, and had afterwards gone to study under Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury, where he was distinguished by his virtues, and his aptitude for learning².

After his return to Northumbria he happened to find the ruins of an old church among the thick woods of Deira, on the site of the modern Beverley, then called Deirwalde, or Deirwood. He repaired the church, dedicated it to S. John the Evangelist, and attached to it a monastery for men. To the south of

² Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. ii. p. 237. Harpesfuld, *Hist. Eccles. sæc. viii.*

the church he built an oratory in honor of S. Martin, with a convent for women; and uniting the whole as a double monastery, he governed as abbot till he was made Bishop of Hexham³.

About this time Theodore had frequent attacks of illness, which warned him that his life could not be much prolonged. He therefore sent for Wilfrid and Earconwald, Bishop of London, and after making to them a confession of the sins of his whole life, he added, that what weighed most on his conscience was his having consented to the spoliation and expulsion of Wilfrid without any just cause. He promised to write on his behalf to those who had persecuted him; and he besought him to consent to be appointed his successor in the archbishopric. This offer Wilfrid declined, because the choice of a successor rested, according to the canons, with the synod that should meet after Theodore's death; but he prayed God and S. Peter to forgive their differences, and promised always to pray for Theodore as his friend.

Theodore accordingly wrote to Aldfrid and Ethelred, and also to Elfreda to use her influence on Wilfrid's

³ There is some difficulty in harmonizing the dates of S. Cuthbert's death, S. John of Beverley's consecration, and S. Wilfrid's return. Bede says that S. Cuthbert resigned his see *two years* after his election, i. e. A.D. 686, which would place his death A.D. 687. Mabillon gives "about A.D. 688" as the date of S. John's consecration (Vit. Joan. Beverlac. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. Obs. Præv.). But as S. Wilfrid returned from exile in the second year of Aldfrid's reign, i. e. before June, A.D. 687. "in the beginning of which reign" Eata had died (Eddius, c. xliii. Bede, t. v. c. ii.), it follows that S. John must have been consecrated before A.D. 688.

behalf. Both the kings were now reconciled to Wilfrid, and restored his abbey^s to him. In obedience to the Pope's decree, Bosa and John of Beverley retired from York and Hexham, and Wilfrid was restored to his diocese⁴, which soon after he divided, as the Pope had ordered, appointing Eadbert to the see of Lindisfarne. Thus was peace restored to the English Church.

⁴ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xix. p. 272. Eadmer, c. li.

CHAPTER X.

ENGLISH BISHOPS AND ABBOTS (*continued*).

WHILE the Church and the nation had been thus troubled, Benedict Biscop, abstracted from the world, had peacefully followed his vocation at Wearmouth, agitated by no fear of earthly ills, and united by Christian charity with all around him. When the Abbey of S. Peter was completed, and the services in the church were fully ordered, Egfrid came to visit it, A.D. 682, and was so charmed with all that Benedict had done, that he gave him another piece of land for forty families at Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, about five miles from Wearmouth, and bade him build on it a church and monastery in honor of S. Paul. This Benedict erected in the same beautiful style as the former one; and when it was finished, he went for the sixth and last time to Rome, to procure all that was required to adorn it. In the church of S. Peter, the pictures representing the events of our Lord's life, formed the crown, so to say, of the picture of our Lady; but in the church of S. Paul the pictures were

so placed as to show the concordance between the Old and New Testament. For instance, Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice, stood side by side with our Lord bearing His Cross; and the brazen serpent raised by Moses in the wilderness, beside our Lord hanging on the Cross. Among many other rich vestments in this church, were two silk palls of exquisite workmanship, which Benedict bought from Aldfrid, paying for them the land of three families on the south bank of the Wear, near its mouth. There was also in the library a marvellous map of the world, which Benedict brought from Rome, and which was considered a very great treasure.

The two monasteries were so united in heart and spirit, that they were "but as one monastery in two places¹," for, "as in life, the body cannot be severed from the head through which it breathes, nor the head from the body by which it lives, so nothing can disturb the concord between two monasteries founded on the fraternal union of the Princes of the Apostles²."

Soon after Benedict's return from Rome, he was attacked by paralysis. He lingered for three years, in the full exercise of his mental powers and following his rule to the last. When he was too weak himself to recite the Psalms of the Office, he made some of the monks repeat them in his presence. On the night of the 12th January, A.D. 690, after having received the Holy Viaticum, he expired just as the monks began to recite the 82nd Psalm, "O God, who shall be like to

¹ Vit. S. Benedict, c. xv.

² Ibid. c. vii.

Thee?" He was buried in the church of S. Peter, "whom he had so loved in his life, and to whom he looked to open the gate of heaven to him³.

After S. Benedict's death the two monasteries were governed, according to his appointment, by Ceolfrid, who had already been Abbot of Jarrow. Ceolfrid fully carried out S. Benedict's intentions. The church was a model of Divine worship to all around, and the school and library became famous throughout Europe, one of the monks of Jarrow being the Venerable Bede. Ceolfrid was very successful in extending the Catholic observance of Easter among the Picts and Irish. At the request of Naitan, King of the Picts, who wished to follow the Roman customs in all respects, he wrote him a long letter on the subject, which Bede has preserved⁴. He also convinced Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, of his error; and Adamnan being unable to induce his own monks to reform their practice, left them and went to Ireland, where he was more successful with the bishops of the north of the island, whom he brought into Catholic unity.

Meanwhile Wilfrid was again in trouble. Though Aldfrid, at Theodore's request, had allowed him to return, he had never been cordially reconciled to him. He restored his lands grudgingly, and under various pretences, retained portions of them⁵, especially those belonging to S. Peter's Church at Ripon. He even

³ Vit. S. Benedict, c. xiv.

⁴ Bede, Eccles. Hist. l. v. c. xxi. p. 277.

⁵ Eddius, c. xlv. Eadmer, c. lii.

went so far as to attempt to seize the abbey itself, in spite of the Papal immunities which had been granted it, and to convert it into a bishopric for Eadhed, whose diocese of Lindsey had been reconquered by Ethelred. When Wilfrid resisted these acts of spoliation, he accused him of despising ecclesiastical authority and not obeying the decrees which Theodore had made in his absence, and which were consequently uncanonical; and Theodore having died A.D. 690, and his successor not being yet elected, he took it upon himself to punish him, and expelled him the kingdom, A.D. 691.

Ethelred now received Wilfrid joyfully, for he had no reason to fear Aldfrid's anger, as he had formerly done Egfrid's; and the see of Lichfield becoming vacant the following year, he gave it to him. For eleven years Wilfrid held this diocese, thus, by a strange providence, exercising episcopal power in a fourth English kingdom, and establishing Roman discipline in it also. At this time he consecrated Oftfor, one of S. Hilda's monks, as Bishop of Worcester. He had also the happiness of consecrating Suidbert, who had been one of his own monks on the Scottish border, to be bishop of the new mission in Friesland, of which more will be said hereafter.

During Wilfrid's second absence, Bosa and John of Beverley resumed their places at York and Hexham; and when Bosa died, A.D. 704, John succeeded him in that see, which he resigned the following year to Wilfrid on his final restoration to his diocese.

Charity and tenderness to the poor and suffering, were S. John of Beverley's distinguishing virtues, of which the following is one among several instances on record.

There was a hermitage in a very secluded spot, about a mile and a half from Hexham and on the other side of the Tyne, to which John would retire with a few companions as often as he could, and especially during Lent, when he was in the habit of taking with him some poor or sick person, whom he might keep by way of alms. One Lent when he bade his attendants look out for some such person to take to the hermitage, they brought him a young man, who had been dumb from his birth, and whose head was covered with a loathsome disease. The bishop had a shed made for him within the enclosure of the hermitage, and daily supplied him with food. On the second Sunday in Lent he sent for the young man and bade him put out his tongue. Then taking him by the chin, he made the sign of the cross on it, and told him to draw it back and say "Yea." The youth did as he was ordered; whereupon the bishop went through the alphabet letter by letter, the youth repeating each letter after him. The bishop went on to syllables and words, and at last to sentences, the youth always doing as he was bid; and as the power of speech thus marvellously came to him, he continued to repeat his lesson day and night, as long as he could keep awake, so overjoyed was he at his newly-acquired gift. The good bishop, too, rejoiced; and he ordered the physician to take in

hand the cure of the youth's head, which was accomplished before very long.

So well known was S. John's charity that people would often appeal to it, by way of inducing him to grant their requests. One day he refused to remain to dinner at an earl's house, but the earl offered, if he would do so, to give alms to the poor, and an abbot who was present did the like. Whereupon John consented for the sake of the poor, to dine with them, though it was otherwise inconvenient to him.

Meanwhile, the honorable position that Wilfrid held in Mercia was very mortifying to Aldfrid; and the more so, because the depressed state of his kingdom disabled him from resenting it. He could not leave Wilfrid in peace, but was ever trying to set the new archbishop against him. S. Berchtwald had been a monk first at Glastonbury, and afterwards at Reculver. He was a very holy man, and led a very austere life; but he was not learned in ecclesiastical matters. Aldfrid at length persuaded him, A.D. 703, to summon a council of all the bishops of his province at Nosterfield, five miles north of Ripon, before whom Wilfrid was cited to appear. Then some of the abbots, who were friends of Aldfrid's, brought false charges against him, and when he refuted them, they accused him of not obeying Theodore's decrees. To which he answered, "I did submit to those decrees, which he promulgated in peace and with a canonical authority, and will in every particular obey them. Nevertheless, tell me how it is, that for two and twenty years you can be

disobedient to the letters sent from the Apostolic See, and so vehemently accuse me because I obey not those decrees of Theodore, which he did not compose by canonical authority, but by the councils of discord, as you very well know."

Still they pressed the charge, and even threatened him. But he only answered as before; till at last, being unable to get any thing further from him, they caught at his words, as being in themselves proud and disobedient, and on this plea they sentenced him to be deprived of all his property, whether in Northumbria or Mercia. This sentence, however, excited such general horror, that Aldfrid and Berchtwald were induced, to allow him to retain his Abbey of Ripon, but upon condition that he was not to go beyond its precincts. Then his enemies tried to persuade him that it would be better for him if he would resign his bishopric, and place himself in the archbishop's hands. But having been forewarned by a young noble of Aldfrid's court, that this was only a stratagem to make him a party to his own condemnation, he boldly replied, "Wherefore would you compel me to turn against myself this sword of direful calamity, the subscription of my own condemnation? Unworthy though I am, I have now borne the name of bishop these forty years; and shall I, without any guilt, make myself a suspected person now? Since the first bishops sent by S. Gregory, was not I the first to root out the evil plants of Irish planting, and bring the Northumbrians back to the Easter and the tonsure of the Holy See? Was I not the first

to teach you how to sing like those of old with double choirs, responsories and antiphons ; and the very first to bring into these parts the monastic rule of the holy Father Benedict ? And now must I condemn myself, conscious as I am of no iniquity ? I appeal with all confidence to the Apostolic See. Let him who wishes to depose me, accompany me to that judgment. Let the learned men of Rome declare for what fault I am to be degraded, before I consent thereto⁶."

The name of Rome was not now heard with laughter and contempt, as it had been four and twenty years before ; for Wilfrid since then had proved its majesty and might. Aldfrid, provoked at the issue to which matters had been driven, would have resorted to violence ; but the bishops insisted, that as Wilfrid had appealed to Rome, he must be left at liberty to go there.

Wilfrid first went into Mercia. Ethelred was true to him, expressed great disgust at the proceedings in Northumbria, and promised to keep his abbeys for him till his return. Then Wilfrid went on his way to Rome. He was seventy years of age, but notwithstanding, he made the long journey for the most part on foot. He arrived in Rome about Christmas. Messengers from Berchtwald with letters of accusation, were there before him. The Pope, John VI., a Greek by birth, summoned several bishops to meet in synod and try the cause. To them Wilfrid presented a petition, praying them, in virtue of Pope S. Agatho's decree, to

⁶ Eddius, c. xlv. p. 76.

order that all the abbeyes and lands which Wulfhere and Ethelred had given him, should be left to him inviolate, and to entreat Aldfrid to fulfil all that Pope S. Agatho had decreed. "Or, if that perchance should seem hard to the king, that at least his bishopric of York and the monasteries which he held, which were very many, might be bestowed, at the Pope's pleasure, on whom he should think would best govern them, the two abbeyes of Ripon and Hexham with their possessions being alone reserved for him'."

The mention of Pope S. Agatho rendered it necessary to refer to the records of his synods. When it was read aloud from them that Wilfrid, Bishop of York, had sat in the council of a hundred and twenty-five bishops, and had confirmed the true and Catholic faith on behalf of the people of England and Ireland, all who were present were amazed, and began to ask who this Bishop Wilfrid was. Then Wilfrid's old friend, Boniface, told them that it was he who was appealing to the Apostolic See; and he gave them all the particulars of the former case. Whereupon the Pope and all the rest declared, that a man of such authority, who had exercised episcopal functions for nearly forty years, ought not to be lightly condemned. The charges against him were accordingly examined in seventy sittings of the synod; and all being proved groundless he was honorably acquitted, and given letters to the two kings and the archbishop, ordering

7 Eddius, c. xlix. p. 79.

that he should be restored to his diocese and all his possessions.

On his journey home Wilfrid had a paralytic seizure, and being carried to Meaux, he lay for four days apparently insensible, his faint breathing alone showing that he was not dead. On the fifth day he suddenly sat up, as if waking from sleep, and fetching a deep sigh, asked for Acca, the priest. Then sending the others out of the room, he said to Acca, "A dreadful vision has now appeared to me, which I wish to keep secret till I know how God will please to dispose of me. There stood by me a certain person in white garments, who told me that he was Michael the Archangel, adding, 'I am sent to save you from death, for our Lord has granted you life through the prayers and tears of your disciples, and the intercession of His blessed Mother Mary, Ever-Virgin. Wherefore you will recover from this illness; but be ready, for I will visit you again in four years. But when you return to your own country, you will recover the possessions that have been taken from you, and will end your days in perfect peace⁸.'" Wilfrid being thus cured, continued his journey to England, where he arrived safely.

Berchtwald received the Pope's letter with due reverence, and promised to reverse the harsh sentence that he had pronounced at Nosterfield⁹. Wilfrid next went to Ethelred, no longer King of Mercia, but a

⁸ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xix. p. 273. Eddius, c. liv.

⁹ It is not certain what place is meant. The original is Onesterfeld. See new edition of Wilkins, iii. p. 254.

monk of the abbey of Bardney in Lincolnshire. Ethelred received the Pope's letter on his knees; and when he had read it, he went with Wilfrid to Cenred, to whom he had given the kingdom of Mercia; and Cenred restored all Wilfrid's abbeys to him. But Aldfrid obstinately refused to obey the Pope's decrees.

Scarcely, however, had Wilfrid's messengers departed, when Aldfrid became very ill, and lost the use of his limbs. When he found that he was dying, he sent for Elfleda, and in the presence of several witnesses confessed to her his sin in persecuting Wilfrid, adding, "If Wilfrid could have come soon enough to me, I would have made amends for my offence. For I have vowed to God and S. Peter, if I get well, to observe all things according to the holy Wilfrid's mind and the judgment of the Apostolic See. But as it pleases God that I shall die, I require, in the name of God, whoever succeeds me to make peace with Bishop Wilfrid, for the repose of my soul and his own."

Aldfrid died A.D. 705, and Eadulf succeeded him. But his only answer to Wilfrid's messengers was, "I swear by my life, if he does not depart my kingdom in six days, as many of his people as I can find I shall put to death." Brief was Eadulf's power to execute this threat; for in two months the nobles conspired against him, dethroned, and killed him. Then Osred, Aldfrid's son, a boy of eight years of age, who was being educated at Ripon, was placed on the throne.

Berchtwald now summoned a council on the river Nid, which was attended by Osred, and all the

Northumbrian bishops, abbots, and nobles. The archbishop explained to the council that only two alternatives lay before them. For they must either be perfectly reconciled to Wilfrid, and reinstate him in those parts of the church which he had formerly governed, or they must appeal again to Rome. And should any one attempt to do otherwise, were he the king or other layman, he would be excommunicated; but were he a bishop or priest (which was more execrable and horrible than could be said), he would be degraded from his sacred office¹.

The bishops made some difficulty about upsetting what had been done at Nosterfield by almost all the English bishops and King Aldfrid. Whereupon Elfleda said, "I bring forward the will of my brother the late King Aldfrid, at the making of which I was present. There he declares, that if he recovers, he will carry out without delay the commands of the Apostolic See: and he charges his successor and heir to complete whatsoever he may not be able to perform."

Berechtfrid, the first of the nobles, also said, "When we were besieged in Bamborough, and were hard pressed by Eadulf's men, we vowed, that if God would give the throne to the young king, we would follow Aldfrid's dying wishes and obey the Apostolic See. This then is the will of the king and his nobles."

The bishops held some further consultation, now with the archbishop, and then again with Elfleda, whose high reputation for wisdom gave her great influence.

¹ Eddius, c. lviii. p. 86.

But at length the king, bishops, and nobles, were all perfectly reconciled to Wilfrid, and restored to him his diocese, his abbeys, and all his possessions². After which, Mass being sung, all the bishops embraced, gave each other the kiss of peace, and received Holy Communion together.

Wilfrid survived four years, governing his church as a father. His word was a law to all in the kingdom, none contradicted him, and no slander was breathed against him. But he knew that his time was short, and he was constantly going from place to place, putting his diocese and his numerous abbeys in order. And as the days and months slipped by, and his strength decayed, his thoughts turned more and more to Rome, the earthly centre of his love and devotion.

One day, in the year 707, he was riding from Hexham, and it was noticed that he stooped very much. The monks heard him mutter half aloud, "It was there I found justice; it is there I will go to pass the remnant of my days, and weep for my many sins."¹ Soon he fell forward on the neck of his horse. The monks carried him, motionless and speechless, into the nearest house. It was a paralytic seizure, such as he had had at Meaux, but before long he revived, and they conveyed him to Ripon.

At Ripon he made his last arrangements. He bade the monks divide his gold, silver, and jewels into four heaps. One they were to give to the poor; a second

² Bede, *Eccles. Hist.* l. v. c. xix. p. 274. Eddius, c. lviii. Eadmer, c. lix.

was for the faithful companions of his exile; a third was to be divided between the abbeys of Ripon and Hexham; and the fourth and best of the heaps he would take to Rome, where he hoped to go and finish his days, and offer it at the churches of S. Mary, the Mother of God, and S. Paul, the Apostle. But if God should provide otherwise, he charged his monks to send his gifts to these churches. He appointed Tatbert to be prior, gave parting advice to his monks, and at last told them that Cenred, King of the Mercians, wished to confer with him about the state of his monasteries in that kingdom, and had promised to dispose his entire life as he should advise. Weeping, his monks fell at his feet. He blessed them and departed, and they saw him no more.

The fruit of Wilfrid's conference with Cenred soon appeared. Cenred, and Offa, King of the East Angles, laid down their crowns, A.D. 709, and went to Rome, where they received S. Peter's tonsure; and Egwin, Bishop of Worcester, went with them. Before long there came a letter from the Pope, ordering Berchtwald to assemble a synod, and publish what great privileges he granted to the Abbey of Evesham, which Egwin had built in honor of our Blessed Lady's appearing to him in the fields on which it stood. Berchtwald summoned the synod to meet at Alcester, seven miles from Evesham, and there, with graceful courtesy, reminding all present that it was Wilfrid who had brought the Benedictine rule into Mercia, he laid on him the task of consecrating Evesham Abbey. This was Wilfrid's last public act.

Soon after, as Wilfrid rode to his monastery at Oundle³, he felt the approach of death. While still on horseback he made a confession of his whole life to Tatbert, enumerated and described all the lands belonging to the different monasteries, and appointed Acca, Bishop of Hexham. On reaching Oundle he said a few words to the brethren; but he was very weak, and could not say much. Then he lay down on his bed; and while he lay silent and motionless, the monks stood around chanting and weeping. And as in the course of the Office they came to the 103rd Psalm, and sang the words, "Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth," he turned his head gently on his cheek, and passed away. When his brethren were placing him in his winding-sheet "there was heard a sweet melody and clapping of wings, as of birds resting above the house, and then flying up to heaven, . . . wherefore devout and prudent persons, there present, interpreted it to be a company of angels, who, according as had been promised him, were come to take his soul to heaven⁴."

After S. Wilfrid's death, S. John of Beverley returned to York, and held the see till A.D. 717, when he resigned it to Wilfrid II., who had been one of S.

³ Bishop Patrick and all the antiquaries of Peterborough, maintain that Oundle was a cell of Peterborough. Eddius and Bede both say that it belonged to S. Wilfrid. Probably it originally belonged to S. Wilfrid, and afterwards was attached to Peterborough. Smith's Note to Bede. *Ap. English Saints. S. Wilfrid*, p. 197.

⁴ Eddius, c. lxiii. p. 78.

Hilda's monks. He then retired to his Abbey of Deirwood, where he ended his days, A.D. 721.

The history of these Northumbrian bishops and abbots, dating from a few years after S. Edwin's conversion, and written in minute detail by their contemporaries, Bede and Eddi, affords remarkable proof of the rapidity with which Christianity took full possession of the English nation. Except in connexion with S. Cuthbert's labors on the wild northern border, and S. Wilfrid's among the South Saxons, there is no reference to Paganism. Christian customs, objects, and motives alone are recorded; and the chief task which fell to these saints, was to cultivate and perfect the Christianity already flourishing around them. This does not prove that Pagan observances did not linger here and there. The Saxon Penitential Book and the Canons of Councils show, that even as far down as the end of the eighth century heathen superstitions subsisted⁵. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that comparatively little trouble seems to have been experienced in putting them down.

Though the simple annals of the poor find little place in history, yet it must not be forgotten, that the foundation of each abbey necessarily involved the consecration of a number of men or women of the middle and lower classes, often hundreds, or even thousands of them, to a life of prayer, obedience, and chastity. These were the true material with which the

⁵ See S. Theodore's Penitential, and the report of the Legatine Synods, A.D. 787.

work was accomplished. In vain would bishops have erected monasteries, or kings have endowed them, if the mass of the nation had not supplied the monks and nuns. The mere fact, that in a land just withdrawn from the lawlessness of piracy, so vast a number of persons of both sexes should have voluntarily submitted themselves to a severe penitential discipline, and lived together in harmony, is the strongest proof that the new religious principle of personal love to God, which Christianity had revealed to the world, had taken a strong hold on the English nation, and penetrated to its very heart's core. It is only reasonable to suppose that among this host of nameless devotees, to a life of perfection, there must have been many saints, who will appear in the great Last Day as resplendent with glory as any of those, whose sanctity has been celebrated in the foregoing pages.

CHAPTER XI.

S. THEODORE AND THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS.

THE archiepiscopate of S. Theodore forms an era in the history of the English Church. The conversion of the whole country being completed, and the generation of the first apostles and converts having died out, the Church was passing beyond its missionary state, and what had hitherto been left dependent on individual fervor and sanctity, must henceforth be made more secure by the usual ecclesiastical organization. S. Gregory's directions to S. Augustine had been so explicit, that Theodore was only required to carry them out more fully than had hitherto been possible.

The circumstances of his appointment to the See of Canterbury have already been mentioned¹. His first care was to inquire into the orders of his bishops and priests; when he declared S. Chad's consecration invalid, and placed S. Wilfrid in his stead in the see of York.

His next business was to fill the vacant sees. Roches-

¹ Vit. S. Theodor. taken from Bede. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. ii. p. 986.

tsr having been unoccupied for five years, he consecrated to it Putta, who was learned in ecclesiastical discipline, and "extraordinarily skilful in the Roman style of church music²." Winfrid, "a good and modest man³," he made Bishop of the Mercians, which see had been vacant for five years since S. Jarnman's death; and Eleutherius he appointed Bishop of the West Saxons, this see having been vacant even longer under the following peculiar circumstances.

On S. Birinus's death, A.D. 650, Agilbert, a French priest, happening to come to Wessex from Ireland, was asked by Cenwealh to accept the see. But after ten years, Cenwealh, who understood no language except English, took a dislike to him on account of his "barbarous tongue," divided the diocese without consulting him, and placed Wini, a West Saxon, at Winchester; whereupon Agilbert quitted the kingdom A.D. 660, and went first to Alchfrid, King of Deira, and afterwards to France, where he became Bishop of Paris. But in the course of three years Cenwealh quarrelled with Wini also, and expelled him from his diocese, A.D. 663; after which the see remained vacant till A.D. 670, when Theodore, at Cenwealh's request, consecrated to it Eleutherius, nephew of Agilbert. Meanwhile Wini took refuge with Wulfhere, King of Mercia, "of whom he purchased for a sum of money the see of London," where he remained till his death⁴.

To prevent a repetition of such abuses, Theodore

² Bede, l. iv. c. ii. p. 173.

³ Ibid. l. iv. c. iii. p. 179.

⁴ Ibid. l. iii. c. vii. p. 120.

decreed that the appointment of bishops should be made in the synod, and that deputies from the vacant church should attend to express their wishes and give their consent. This was the custom followed by him and his immediate successors. But in the diocese of York the bishop was elected by the clergy of the church⁵.

The establishment of synodal action was another great work of Theodore's. His first synod was held at Hertford, A.D. 673. In it the bishops adopted all the canons of the Church, and at Theodore's recommendation, they more specially confirmed ten. These refer to the keeping of Easter, the restricting of bishops and priests to officiate only in their own diocese, confining monks to their own monasteries, protecting the independence of the religious bodies, enforcing the Christian laws of marriage, and appointing synods to be held annually at Cloveshoe⁶.

In the ninth canon the necessity for increasing the number of bishoprics, was set forth in general terms; but this was a delicate affair, demanding time and prudence. Bisi, Bishop of the East Angles, becoming superannuated, Theodore took advantage of the occasion to divide the diocese into two. Winfrid, Bishop of the Mercians, being deposed for some act of disobedience, Theodore divided Mercia into five dioceses. Then came the division of the diocese of York, the

⁵ Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, i. c. ii. p. 91.

⁶ Bede, l. iv. c. v. p. 181. Cloveshoe is generally believed to have been Cliff, in Kent, but some suppose it was Abingdon, in Berkshire.

troubled history of which has been given. Good, however, resulted from these troubles, for they drew out more clearly the true rules of ecclesiastical discipline and the right of appeal to Rome. Theodore's successor, Berchtwald, divided the diocese of the West Saxons into two bishoprics; but he had to threaten King Ina and his witan with excommunication before he could carry out this arrangement.

Theodore also drew up a Penitential and a Book of Canons. The estimation in which he was held, appears from the fact, that his canons for ordination are quoted both in the Roman Ordo and the Irish Collection of Canons.

Theodore's archiepiscopate was also an epoch in the intellectual development of the nation. Its rapid progress in learning is one of the remarkable points connected with its conversion. It is hard to conceive or to over-estimate the difficulties which had to be overcome by the first English students, barbarians by birth and early habits, living in the midst of a barbarous society, cut off from the unconscious help afforded by civilized associations, and with very few books. Notwithstanding, in less than a century, not only had these barbarians become the best scholars of the age, but the Pope sought their aid to solve difficult questions⁷, and the reputation of some of their writings still survives.

⁷ Letter from Pope Sergius to Cedfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, asking that Bede, or some other learned monk, be sent to Rome. Bede's Works, ed. Giles, i. Life of Bede, c. vi. p. 62.

For the first seventy years after S. Augustine's arrival, education in England seems to have been confined to the rudiments of learning, the students who aspired to any thing more, going to Ireland in its pursuit.

But Theodore and Hadrian brought in a higher style of education. Both of them were fine Greek and Latin scholars, and were familiar with all the sciences then known; and Hadrian especially, has been styled "a fountain of letters and a river of arts". Both of them, and more particularly Hadrian, who was Abbot of S. Augustine's at Canterbury, devoted all their leisure to the school of that monastery. S. Benedict Biscop, who had had charge of the school for two years on Theodore's first arrival, transplanted its educational system to the north, where it flourished in his own Abbeys of Wearmouth and Jarrow. Monks came from other monasteries to study at Canterbury, and returned as accomplished scholars to teach in their own schools. And thus, within a very few years the highest style of education then known, was spread throughout England.

The studies included Latin and Greek, grammar, rhetoric, logic, and arithmetic, which in that age was a science of extreme difficulty. For Arabic numbers being unknown, all calculations had to be made with Roman letters, often helped out by words and a sort of

³ William of Malmesbury. *De Pontificibus*, l. v. sect. 1. Gale, p. 338.

duodecimal system, each number being divided into twelve parts, corresponding to the divisions of Roman money⁹. Versification and geography, or cosmography as it was called, were also taught, of both of which the English were very fond. Great account too was made of music, especially the Roman chant. But the motive and central object of the whole course of education, to which all else tended, was theology and the study of the Holy Scriptures, both in the text itself and in the commentaries on it by the Fathers of the Church. The feeling of these first English scholars cannot be better expressed, than by the following extract from a letter, addressed by S. Aldhelm to one of his former pupils. "Never suffer yourself to be made a slave to the love of money, or of secular glory, or of that vain parade which is so hateful to God. . . Rather, my beloved, devote yourself to the reading of the Scriptures, or to holy prayer; and if in addition you wish to acquire some knowledge of secular learning, do it, but only with this view, that . . . as the meaning of every word or smallest part of Holy Writ depends on the rules of grammar, you may be the better able to dive into the deep and most spiritual signification of God's Word, by your more perfect acquaintance with those various forms of speech in which it is expressed¹." Thus, as the relics of ancient civilization had been preserved during the barbarian invasions through the Church's efforts to preserve the knowledge and love of God, so

⁹ Christian Schools and Scholars, vol. i. c. iii. p. 100.

¹ Wilhelm. Malmesbur. De Pontificibus, l. v. sect. 1. Gale, p. 341.

the same supernatural motive became the spring of the new civilization, and holy bishops and monks, while seeking to gain and to spread the more perfect knowledge and love of God, laid the foundations of that intellectual culture which is the pride of modern times.

The English showed such aptitude for acquiring knowledge, that remarkable success crowned the labors of Theodore and Hadrian. Many of their scholars were as familiar with Latin and Greek as with their own tongue². A crowd of disciples, both lay and clerical, flocked round them; and the passion for learning was so widely diffused, that princes and nobles sent their children to the cloister schools, and kings gave their leisure hours to study. The love of letters spread even to the women. Schools were established in their convents. English nuns corresponded with learned bishops in Latin, sought recreation in composing Latin verses³, read the Latin Scriptures and commentaries of the Fathers, and even wrote books in Latin⁴, besides applying themselves to the study of profane history, chronology, and grammar. The high education common to English nuns, appears from the fact that S. Aldhelm addressed his treatise, "*De Laudibus Virginitatis*," to S. Hildeleth, Abbess of Barking, and her nuns⁵.

In the course of a few years, the English schools

² Bede, l. iv. c. ii. p. 173.

³ S. Boniface's Letters.

⁴ The lives of S. Willibald and S. Winibald were written by an English nun, who was probably their sister, S. Walburga.

⁵ Vit. S. Hildeleth. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 289.

and scholars were universally looked upon as the best in Europe. And when, after the Danish invasions, England fell back into darkness and ignorance, the national reputation was kept up by S. Boniface's school at Fulda, by Alcuin's labors at the court of Charlemagne and in his Abbey of S. Martin at Tours, and by the wide diffusion of the works of S. Bede, S. Aldhelm, and Alcuin. Though the Latin of the English writers and their German scholars cannot bear comparison with that of Cicero and Virgil, yet competent and unprejudiced judges rank it as equal, and often superior to that of the Latin writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, when the language had gone through those phases, which are inseparable from the vitality of every living tongue⁶.

The zeal of the English scholars in the pursuit of knowledge, may be estimated by their success in collecting books. As soon as Theodore and Hadrian had given an impulse to learning, books were sought for with untiring activity and perseverance. Every scrap of ancient literature was eagerly caught at and treasured. Long journeys were made to buy books, or even to get a sight of them; rich scholars deemed no price too high to give for them, and poor ones deprived themselves of the necessaries of life to obtain them. A book was the most precious gift that a friend or patron could offer. Even the loan of a book was received with gratitude, and hundreds of monks and nuns were daily employed in copying them. By dint

⁶ Lingard, ii. c. xi. p. 215.

of such zeal and industry the English libraries became so rich, that when, about a century later, Charlemagne set to work under Alcuin's guidance to revive learning in Gaul, it was to England that he sent for books. It is impossible to say how many of the precious relics of antiquity have been preserved for the present age, solely through the diligence of nameless English book-lovers.

In common with all the German nations, the English had a passion for poetry and music. The bard or gleeman was to be found in every thane's house, and in all the villages; and even the common people knew the popular songs by heart, and could sing them to the harp. Their Pagan poetry is totally lost, but it long lingered in the memory of the people, and must have been committed to writing; for it was one of the charges brought against S. Dunstan in the tenth century, that he had learned the Pagan poetry of his ancestors⁷.

It was very desirable to supplant these Pagan songs by Christian poetry, and this was the first use to which the new learning was applied. For it is supposed that all the early English Christian poems were written between A.D. 680 and A.D. 731⁸.

The first English Christian poet was Ceadmon, a farm-servant of S. Hilda's, who could neither read nor write; and being unable to sing, he was in the habit of

⁷ Lingard, ii. c. xiii. p. 270.

⁸ Wright's *Essay on the Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*. Ap. Bede, iv. c. xxiv. p. 217, note.

going home when it was proposed at feasts, according to custom, that all present should sing in turn.

One night he had thus retired to the stable, in which were the horses of which he had charge, and here he lay down to sleep. As he slept, a person appeared to him and said, "Ceadmon, sing me a song." He answered, "I cannot sing; for that was the reason that I left the feast and came here." The other replied, "However, you shall sing." "What shall I sing?" rejoined Ceadmon. "Sing the beginning of created things," said the other. Then Ceadmon begun to sing verses which he had never heard, to the praise of God in the creation; and when he awoke, he remembered the verses that he had sung in his sleep, and was able to add others to the glory of God.

The next morning he went to the steward under whom he worked, and told him what had happened. The steward took him to S. Hilda, who called in several holy monks to help her to judge of his gift. They explained to him a passage of Scripture, and bade him turn it into verse; and the next morning he returned, and repeated to them all that they had taught him, but in such beautiful poetry, that every one declared he had received a great gift from God. Ceadmon then became a monk in the Abbey of Whitby, and by S. Hilda's command he was fully instructed in the Scriptures and the doctrines of religion. He remembered all that was told him, and meditated upon it; and he would repeat the whole in the most harmonious verse. Thus he sang of all the historical events of the

Christian faith; and being a man of no less zeal than humility and sweetness, the great object of all his poetry was to glorify God, and to inspire men with a love of holiness and a hatred of sin. His poetry was quickly caught up and spread far and wide; many tried to imitate him, but it was acknowledged by all that none could bear comparison with him¹.

What the illiterate ploughman, Ceadmon, did for the north of England, was done for the south by the learned abbot and bishop, S. Aldhelm². He was nearly allied to the royal family of Wessex; and his father, wishing to give him an education suited to his high birth, sent him to Hadrian's school. Here, besides following the usual round of study, he paid great attention to Roman jurisprudence, and read the Hebrew Scriptures. Alfred called him the prince of native poets³, and besides writing ballads which were very popular for many centuries after his death, he translated the Psalter into English. But no fragment of his English poems is now extant. His Latin poetry and prose works too, were highly esteemed during the early middle ages⁴. He wrote a long letter to Gerontius, the British King of Dumnonia, or Devonshire, on the subject of Catholic unity, but apparently without any results⁵.

When Aldhelm's education was completed, he went

¹ Bede, l. iv. c. xxiv. p. 217.

² Vit. S. Aldhelm, by William of Malmesbury. *Anglia Sacra*, ii. p. 1.

³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁴ *Christian Schools and Scholars*, vol. i. c. iii. p. 100.

⁵ Ep. S. Bonifac. 163 Wurd. 44 Serar.

to the monastery of Meldum, or Malmesbury, which Meildulf, an Irish hermit, had built on the ruins of an old castle. Here he received the tonsure, and rose in time to be the master of the school, and afterwards the abbot. He so greatly enlarged the monastery, building a beautiful church in honor of our Lord and S. Peter and getting so many privileges for it, that he may be regarded as its founder. He was a great friend of S. Wilfrid's, and warmly advocated his cause in a letter addressed to some abbots, who, having followed him into exile, were disposed to make their peace with Aldfrid in order to return to their homes.

In the year 705, when Berchtwald divided the diocese of the West Saxons, Aldhelm became Bishop of Sherborne, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Berkshire, Somersetshire, and Devonshire being included in his see, while Hampshire and Sussex alone remained to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester.

But however high were Aldhelm's station and reputation, he was true to the principles which he had laid down in his letter already quoted, and prized knowledge only in connexion with God's glory. He deemed it not beneath him to assume, for the love of souls, the office of gleeman. For having noticed that his flock were rude, ignorant people, who performed their devotions in a formal way, rushing out of church and hurrying to their work the moment Mass was over, he would often place himself on a bridge or at the junction of cross roads, and would sing to the harp the poems that he had composed to interest the common

people; and when a crowd had thus collected he would preach the Gospel to them. He died A.D. 709.

But the scholar of that period who had the widest and most enduring reputation, was the Venerable Bede. He tells us, "I was born" (about A.D. 673) "in the territory of the monastery of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, which is at Wearmouth and Jarrow, and being given at seven years of age, to be educated by the most reverend Abbot Benedict, and afterwards by Ceolfrid, and spending all the remaining time of my life in that monastery, I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture, and amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing. In the nineteenth year of my age I received deacons' orders, and in the thirtieth, those of the priesthood, both of them by the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John of Beverley, and by order of the Abbot Ceolfrid; from which time till the fifty-ninth year of my age, I have made it my business for the use of me and mine, to compile passages out of the works of the venerable Fathers, and to interpret and explain them according to their meaning⁶." These simple lines graphically depict the life of

⁶ Conclusion of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, p. 297. There has been considerable discussion as to Bede's having gone to Rome in consequence of an invitation from Pope Sergius I., his name being inserted in some copies of the Pope's letter, while a blank space for the name is left in the older MSS. His own words, given in the text, support the idea that he did not go; and also in his treatise *De Natura Rerum* he says expressly that he did not accompany the monks who went to Rome

the humble monk, whose fame as a scholar spread over Europe even in his lifetime, while his sanctity won for him the distinctive and endearing title of the Venerable.

One incident alone of his early life is recorded. In the year 683, he was sent from Wearmouth to the newly founded monastery at Jarrow, where three years later a terrible pestilence carried off all the monks except himself and Ceolfrid the abbot. But the abbot and the little boy continued in the midst of their tears the usual round of devotions, and chanted the office in choir day and night at the regular hours.

Besides the commentaries on Holy Scripture above mentioned, which embraced almost the whole of both the Old and New Testaments, Bede also wrote a martyrology, the lives of S. Cuthbert and the abbots of his own monastery, a Summary of Universal History from the creation of the world, the Ecclesiastical History of England, which preserves its reputation to the present day, and treatises on all the sciences then known. His works are marked by the high and generous spirit which characterized the learning of that age. His first object was to use all human knowledge as steps whereby to lead the student to God; and his second, to diffuse learning, rather than to increase and amass it as a personal treasure. His historical works are considered to have done much towards giving a Chris-

A.D. 701, which was the year after Pope Sergius wrote, and also the year of that Pope's death. Bede's Works, vol. i. Life of Bede, c. vi, p. 61.

tian tone to the awaking intellect of Europe; and his treatise on grammar and orthography contributed to impress a regular and lucid character on the modern languages, which were being formed during the eighth and ninth centuries⁷.

But what most endeared Bede's memory to his countrymen, was his translation of the four Gospels and the Psalter into English—a task of extraordinary difficulty, as the language had only recently assumed a written form, and was still destitute of regular grammar. A poetical fragment of the twelfth century, found in Worcester Cathedral, speaks of him affectionately as the saint “who taught our people in English,” and “wisely translated for their instruction⁸.”

The account of his last illness and death, written by his disciple, Cuthbert, who waited on him, is most touching⁹.

“He was much troubled with shortness of breath, yet without pain, for a fortnight before the day of our Lord's Resurrection, and in this condition he continued till the day of our Lord's Ascension (May 26th). All this time he passed his life cheerfully and joyfully, giving thanks to Almighty God both by day and night, or rather at all hours of the day and night. He continued to give us lessons daily, spending the rest of his time in psalmody, and the night also in joy and

⁷ Rohrbacher, t. x. l. li. p. 436.

⁸ Christian Schools and Scholars, vol. i. c. iii. p. 118.

⁹ Vit. Venerabil. Bed. Acta SS. O. S. B. sæc. iii. t. i. p. 503. This translation is taken from Lingard, ii. c. xi. p. 195.

thanksgiving, unless he were interrupted by a short sleep; and yet even then, the moment he awoke he began again, and never ceased with outstretched hands to return thanks to God. I declare with truth that I have never seen with my eyes, nor heard with my ears, any man so earnest in giving thanks to the living God. . . . He also sang antiphons, according to our custom and his own, one of which is, 'O glorious King, Lord of all power, who, triumphing this day, didst ascend above all the heavens, do not forsake us orphans.' . . . And when he came to that word, 'do not forsake us,' he burst into tears and wept much; and an hour after he began to repeat what he had commenced, and we, hearing it, mourned with him. By turns we read, and by turns we wept, nay, we wept always while we read. In such joy we passed the Lent till the aforesaid day; and he rejoiced much, and gave God thanks, because he had been thought worthy to be so weakened. He often repeated, 'God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;' and much more out of Holy Scripture. . . . During those days, besides the lessons which he gave us, and the chant of the psalms, he undertook the composition of two memorable books, that is, he translated into our language the Gospel of S. John for the benefit of the Church, and made a collection of extracts from the Notes of Bishop Isidore, saying, 'I will not have my pupils read what is false, and labor therein without profit after my death.' On the Tuesday before Ascension, his difficulty of breathing began to distress him exceedingly, and a slight swelling

appeared in his feet. He spent all that day and dictated to us with cheerfulness, saying occasionally, 'Go on quickly, I know not how long I may last. Perhaps in a very short time my Maker may take me?' It seemed to us that he knew the time of his death. He lay awake the whole night praising God: and at dawn on the Wednesday morning, ordered us to write diligently, which we did till the hour of tierce (9 A.M.) At that hour we walked in procession with the relics, as the rubric for the day prescribed; but one of us remained to wait on him, and said to him, 'Dearest master, there still remains one chapter unwritten. Will it fatigue you if I ask more questions?' He answered, 'No. Take your pen and mend it, and write quickly.' This he did."

That afternoon at three o'clock, he distributed his few valuables in his little chest,—“pepper, handkerchiefs, and incense” among the priests of the monastery, and “he spoke to each one in his turn, reminding and entreating them to celebrate Masses and pray diligently for him, which all readily promised to do. When they heard him say that they would see him no more in this world, all burst into tears; but their tears were tempered with joy when he said, ‘It is time that I return to Him who made me out of nothing. I have lived long, and kindly hath my merciful Judge forecast the course of my life for me. The time of my dissolution is at hand. I wish to be released and to be with Christ.’

“In this way he continued to speak cheerfully till

sunset, when the forementioned youth said, 'Beloved master, there is still one sentence unwritten.' He answered, 'Then write quickly.' In a few minutes the youth said, 'It is finished.' He replied, 'Thou hast spoken truly. Take my head between thy hands, for it is my delight to sit opposite to that holy place in which I used to pray: let me sit and invoke my Father.' Sitting thus on the pavement of his cell and repeating, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost'—as he said the word 'Ghost' he breathed his last, and took his departure for heaven¹," May 26th, A.D. 735.

During the worse than Pagan ravages of William the Conqueror, the Abbey of Jarrow was totally destroyed. But at a later period three monks took up their abode in the ruins, and showed strangers the little stone cell in which Bede prayed, read, and dictated to his disciples, and the altar on which he offered Mass, in the centre of which was a piece of green marble. In the modern town of Jarrow there is a fountain, still called Bede's fountain, to which it was the custom, as late as A.D. 1740, to bring children to be cured of their diseases².

The worthy successor of these Christian scholars was Alcuin, a native of York, born before A.D. 740, within a few years of Bede's death. But he belongs to another

¹ Bede is said to have died on Ascension Day, because at that time the day was reckoned to begin from sunset. Ascension Day that year fell on May 26th.

² Bede's Works, vol. i. Life of Bede, c. xii. p. 100.

period and sphere of labor, and therefore it will here suffice to record only his name, which threw such lustre on the English schools.

But notwithstanding the joyful fervor with which the English nation had received Christianity, and the rapidity with which it had transformed the national character, one glorious jewel was still wanting to the English Church; for none of her children yet wore the martyr's crown, nor happily, could they aspire to win it in their native land. Still, the close union which ever subsists between the suffering Head and His loving members, had infused the martyr's spirit into many an English heart; and the deep longing to suffer and to die for Jesus, being cut off from its natural outlet, flowed over in love for those for whom Jesus had suffered and died. Hence, scarcely had the whole of England been converted, when, within a century of S. Augustine's arrival, and only sixty years after S. Edwin's baptism, there burst forth a noble missionary zeal, which, taking its direction from the warm family affections characteristic of the English race, stirred the entire nation with the most fervent desire to share their own joyful hopes of the glorious and eternal kingdom with their kindred in their old German home. Under the strong impulse of pure Christian charity, crowds of English monks and nuns, as will hereafter be more fully told, tore themselves from every best loved tie, bade a life-long adieu to their native land, and joyfully braving hunger and thirst, cold and fatigue, toil, danger, and even death, found in the dark forests and wild marshes of old

Germany, at once the apostle's and the martyr's crown.
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wanting to complete young England's glorious diadem
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